





# Saudi Arabia takes up fight against militants

DUBAI (AFP) — The Saudi royal family has gone on the offensive against militants who have claimed responsibility for two unprecedented bombings against U.S. forces and vowed to drive them out of the kingdom.

The stakes are high. "The prize is not only Saudi Arabia, it's two thirds of the oil reserves in the world," U.S. Defence Secretary William Perry said recently.

But the Pentagon chief said the militants will fail to achieve their aim.

The authorities have hit back in the last year by making mass arrests, tightening security and beheading a group of young Saudis for the first bombing which killed five Americans at a U.S. army center in Riyadh in November 1995.

They are still investigating a second bombing in June that killed 19 U.S. airmen at the Dhahran air base in eastern Saudi Arabia.

And although few analysts believe the Al Saud's 60-year reign is threatened, they expect militants to launch more attacks against not only U.S. forces in the kingdom but also Saudi targets.

"You should expect a lot of these things (bombings) to happen," a moderate Saudi Islamist warned.

The Saudis and the Americans have taken precautions.

U.S. troops have been relocated to bases considered less vulnerable to attack while security has been boosted around royal palaces and councils

where princes meet with their subjects.

The Islamists want U.S. forces out because they say they violate the land housing Islam's holiest shrines and are the vanguard of a neo-colonial power which seeks control of the region's oil.

Ossama Ben Laden, a militant stripped of his Saudi nationality, urged European countries in November to withdraw their troops from the Gulf before the guerrilla war he declared against the United States "erupts."

The four Sunni Muslim militants beheaded in May had confessed on state television to having trained in Afghanistan and been inspired by dissident Saudis including Ben Laden, who has financed militants in Afghanistan.

Arab diplomats said Saudi Arabia's support for the holy war against the former Soviet occupation of Afghanistan has come back to haunt it as Saudi veterans of that war return to civilian life.

Unconfirmed reports have emerged that Shiite Muslims are suspects in the June bombing and that Iran backed it. Saudi Arabia's Shiite minority lives in the Dhahran area while Sunnis live in Riyadh and the rest of the kingdom.

Diplomats told AFP that three Saudis and three Shiite Muslim Arabs — two Kuwaitis and a Lebanese — were arrested in connection with the attack. Kuwait denies its nationals were arrested.

Meanwhile, a London-based opposition group, the observatory of the



RECONCILED: Minister of Agriculture Mustafa Shneikat (right), who is also a deputy, and Deputy Ali Shatti embrace each other after being reconciled by Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti during Sunday's session of the Lower House. The two deputies had clashed during a previous session of the House (see story on page 1) (photo by Yousef Allan)

## Jordan will not issue any document related to land in Palestinian territory

AMMAN (J.T.) — The government will not issue or endorse any power of attorney or any other document pertaining to lands under the jurisdiction of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in the West Bank and Jerusalem and its suburbs as well as the Palestinian lands occupied by Israel since 1948.

This decision was announced by Minister of Justice Abdul Karim Al Dughni in a statement published by Al Ra'i Arabic daily on Sunday.

This decision, according to the minister, reaffirms that the Jordanian government will not be party to any transaction involving Palestinian lands or be a catalyst towards evicting Palestinians from their homeland.

He said the decision, which was taken Saturday, was based on a 1995 Jordanian law on economic boycott of the enemy.

Mr. Dughni said he had sent copies of the ministry's decision to all notary public offices around the country, concerned government departments and Jordanian embassies and consulates abroad.

The director general of the Lands and Survey Department, Ibrahim Mismar, announced Sunday that his department would refrain from issuing any official document connected with lands and other real estates in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip except upon a decision in this matter from the Council of Ministers.

Mr. Mismar, also in a

statement to Al Ra'i, said that his department possesses maps of lands and a register of owners of land in Palestinian lands, including pre-1948 Palestinians, but he stressed that his department could not issue any document related to these lands except with the approval of the Council of Ministers.

He said his department could issue any document concerning the lands of Palestine before 1948 simply because they had never been under Jordanian sovereignty.

Mr. Mismar noted, however, that this subject could come up for discussion once the Palestinians and Israel conclude a final and permanent settlement based on international conventions.

## Kuwait professor prepares Iraq war crimes case

KUWAIT (Agencies) — A Kuwait university professor has prepared a war crimes case against Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and 115 of his aides, a newspaper reported on Sunday.

The case by faculty of law dean Ahmad Al Samdan will be presented to the university which "will then take the appropriate measures through the foreign ministry to make an international case," said the Arab Times.

Mr. Samdan heads a legal team seeking the trial of President Saddam and other Iraqi officials for crimes allegedly committed during Iraq's seven-month occupation of Kuwait in 1990-91.

"The main charges target Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, his brother-in-law Ibrahim Sabawi, deceased son-in-law general Hussein Kamel Hassan, (and Saddam's son) Uday Saddam Hussein," added the daily.

Kuwait had sought advice from international law experts on war crimes, officials earlier said. Mr. Samdan's team based the charges mainly on Iraqi intelligence documents left behind by fleeing Iraqi forces during the 1991 Gulf war.

A Kuwaiti newspaper had reported last year that Kuwait planned to ask the United Nations Security Council to form a tribunal to try President Saddam and 647 other Iraqis.

Kuwait has accused Iraq's occupation forces of a wide range of crimes including rape, torture, looting and random execution and arrest of civilians. About 300 Kuwaitis and dozens of Arab and Asian expatriates

were killed during the occupation.

With the prospect of soon being able to make its first substantial payments, the United Nations Compensation Commission is beginning to process a large and unique claim related to a collection of Islamic art that largely disappeared during Iraq's occupation of Kuwait, the United Nations Information Service (UNIS) reported.

The collection, belonging to renowned Kuwaiti collector Jasim Y. Homaizi was considered in Islamic art circles as one of the most prestigious in the world. Following the invasion, many of its most precious pieces ended up in Baghdad and Amman, where dealers have sought to smuggle them to Western cities.

Mr. Homaizi alerted the International Criminal Police Organisation (Interpol) and Scotland Yard in time and hired private detectives to follow illicit transactions involving collection pieces. He also brought the attempted smuggling operations to the attention of such widely known auction firms as Sotheby's Christie's and Phillips, which led to the arrest of several clandestine sellers and to the recovery of several pieces.

The United Nations Compensation Commission submitted the claim concerning the collection to the panel of commissioners resolving category "D" claims (individual losses above \$100,000). The panel will be assisted by an Islamic art expert in the verification and evaluation of those pieces in the collection still to be recovered, which are worth over \$30 million.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Princess Sarvath visits phonetic centre

AMMAN (J.T.) — Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath Sunday toured the University of Jordan's Centre for Phonetics Research and inspected the equipment there. Princess Sarvath was received by University of Jordan President Fawzi Gharaibeh and the centre's director, Mohammad Al Anani. Dr. Anani briefed Princess Sarvath on the centre's activities, programmes and needs and thanked her for her interest in the centre and concern to meet its needs.

### Osama Al Baz, Albright hold talks

CAIRO (AFP) — Osama Al Baz, advisor to President Hosni Mubarak, said Saturday he held talks with U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright on promoting the Middle East peace process. Mr. Baz, who returned from Washington on Saturday, said his talks with Ms. Albright, who has been the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, were the first that an Egyptian official had had with U.S. President Bill Clinton's nominee to head the State Department. "We exchanged views on the peace process and the necessity of arriving at a quick understanding between Israel and the Palestinian National Authority on Hebron, the implementation of the accord extending autonomy on the West Bank and the resumption of negotiations on the final status" of the Palestinian territories, Mr. Baz said after his 10-day visit to the United States. He said he also held talks with the assistant U.S. secretary of state for the Near East, Robert Pelletreau and with U.S. National Security Advisor Anthony Lake, who has been nominated to head the Central Intelligence Agency. Mr. Mubarak has said he will visit Washington in December.

### Kuwait removes middlemen in arms deals

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait said on Sunday it has eliminated middlemen from arms purchases to cut costs. Defence Minister Sheikh Salem Sabah Al Salem Al Sabah told the official Kuwait news agency "the system of brokers in arms and maintenance deals has been cancelled. It is not acceptable." Parliamentarians often criticise large commissions for brokers in multi-billion-dollar arms deals and have opened several inquiries in alleged irregularities. "The Defence Ministry is willing to deal with governments whose countries produce weapons directly through the manufacturing firms," the agency reported. Kuwait is a major arms importer with several proposed purchases of weapons and services. After the 1991 Gulf war when Iraqi occupation forces were driven out it launched a \$12 billion rearmament plan to continue until 2004.

### Demirel flies to Kazakhstan for talks

ANKARA (AFP) — President Suleyman Demirel flew to Kazakhstan Sunday to attend ceremonies marking the fifth anniversary of the former Soviet republic's independence and to hold economic cooperation talks. "I will discuss with Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev ways to boost two-way trade between our countries," Mr. Demirel told reporters here before leaving for Almaty. Turkey's investments in Kazakhstan have exceeded \$3 billion since December 1991 when the Central Asian republic became independent, Turkish sources said. The two-way trade was nearly \$200 million last year.

### Two beheaded in S. Arabia

RIYADH (AP) — An Egyptian convicted of murder and a Pakistani found guilty of drug trafficking were beheaded in Saudi Arabia Sunday. There have now been 69 executions this year under the kingdom's strict interpretation of Islamic law. An Interior Ministry statement said Harbi bin Ibrahim Sadeek was found guilty of killing Nohh Ben Faragly Ben Maher Abdul Ela, a fellow Egyptian, by hitting him twice on the head with a metal object after an argument. Sadeek was beheaded in the western city of Medina 869 kilometres from the capital, Riyadh. The statement did not say where or when the crime took place. Another statement issued by the ministry said Gholam Murtaza Haji Ahmed Bakhash was found guilty of attempting to smuggle heroin into the kingdom. He was beheaded Sunday in the Red Sea port city of Jeddah. It said Bakhash had swallowed an unspecified quantity of the narcotic to avoid detection but was caught by police. The statement did not say where or when he was caught. Under the version of Islamic law applied in the kingdom, convicted murderers, rapists and drug traffickers are publicly beheaded. Arab and Western human rights organisations have criticised the beheadings, saying defendants often are executed without a fair trial. A record 192 people were beheaded last year in Saudi Arabia.

## Germans have uncovered illegal arms sales to Iran, two magazines report

BONN (AP) — German firms are suspected of illegally supplying Iran's weapons programme, including by the supply of materials for germ warfare, a news magazine said Saturday.

German authorities raided the offices of an Iranian arms buying agency and are investigating which German firms it used as illegal suppliers, the magazines Der Spiegel and Focus said in previews of their latest editions.

German firms are suspected of supplying "components for the entire Iranian weapons programme, including biological weapons," sometimes through Iranian dummy companies in Germany, Der Spiegel said.

On Thursday and Friday, investigators raided two German firms, Focus said. Neither report named any firms.

State prosecutors in Duesseldorf are investigating members of the Iranian defense industries organisation's office in that city to see whether they could be charged with breaching German export laws, Focus said.

German investigators seized a number of records when they raided the office,

reputedly Iran's arms buying centre in Europe, in October and November, the reports said.

A special team at German y's customs police is sifting the data to determine which German companies illegally sold equipment and components to the Iranian arms industry, Focus said.

Der Spiegel said Iranian diplomats in Germany protested the raids and urged German companies it was dealing with to bring potentially damaging records to Iran's embassy in Bonn.

Germany's federal intelligence agency, the BND, says Iran built up contacts with German firms that supplied arms to Iraq in the past, according to Der Spiegel.

German and Iranian embassy officials were not available for comment.

Germany is Iran's biggest western trading partner. Together with most other European countries, it has fought U.S. calls to isolate the Tehran leadership. Washington accuses Iran of sponsoring terrorism.

## JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 15, Aqaba 22 Humidity readings: Amman 53 per cent. Aqaba 38 per cent.

### USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

**NIGHT DUTY AMMAN:**  
Dr. Adnan Zaghloul .....898140  
Dr. Mazen Nballi .....830435  
Dr. Khalil Abu Marjoub .....779797  
Dr. Fayed Al Dabbas .....759155  
Ferdows pharmacy .....778336  
Al Asema pharmacy .....637055  
Nairoukh pharmacy .....623672  
Al Salam pharmacy .....636730  
Yacoub pharmacy .....649485  
Shmeisani pharmacy .....637660  
Nairoukh pharmacy .....847632

### IRBID:

Dr. Mazen Abu Bakr .....76852  
Al Quds pharmacy .....(—)  
ZARQA:  
Dr. Zuhur Al Qadi .....906606  
Khalifeh pharmacy .....985417

### EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre .....637111  
Civil Defence Department .....661111  
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue .....630541  
Civil Defence Emergency .....199  
Rescue Police .....192, 62111, 637777

Fire Brigade .....617101  
Blood Bank .....775121  
Highway Police .....843402  
Traffic Police .....896390  
Public Security Dept. ....630321  
Hotel Complaints .....605800  
Price Complaints .....661176  
Water & Sewerage Complaints .....897467  
Amman Municipality Complaints .....787111  
Telephone Information (directory assistance) .....121  
Overseas Calls .....010230  
Central Amman Telephone Repairs .....623101  
Abdali Tel. Repairs .....661101  
Jordan Television .....773111  
Radio Jordan .....774111  
Water Authority .....680100  
J. Electricity Authority .....815615  
Electric Power Co. ....636381  
RJ Flight Information .....08-53200  
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

### HOSPITAL

**AMMAN:**  
Husseini Medical Centre .....813813/32  
Khalidi Maternity .....644281/6  
Akileh Maternity .....64241/2  
Jabal Amman Maternity .....642362  
Malhas, J. Amman .....636140  
Palestine, Shmeisani .....607071  
Shmeisani Hospital .....669131  
University .....845845  
Al-Muasher Hospital .....667227/9  
The Islamic, Abdali .....666126/37

Al-Ahli, Abdali .....664164/6  
Italian, Al-Muhajreen .....777101/3  
Al-Bashir .....775112/6  
Army, Marka .....891611/5  
Queen Alia Hospital .....602240/50  
Ansal Hospital .....674155  
The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery .....865199

### ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital .....(09)983323  
Zarqa National Hospital .....(09)900560  
Ibn Sina Hospital .....(09)986732  
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (RJ) .....(09)990990  
**IRBID:**  
Princess Basma Hospital .....(02)755555  
Greek Catholic Hospital .....(02)727275  
Ibn Al Nafees Hospital .....(02)247100  
**AQABA:**  
Princess Haya Hospital .....(03)314111

### FOR THE TRAVELLER QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified. Information on other flights

### ARRIVALS

**Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights**  
07:15 .....Jeddah (RJ)  
08:35 .....Jeddah (RJ)  
09:00 .....Jeddah (add) (RJ)  
09:40 .....Aqaba (add) (RJ)  
09:45 .....New Delhi (RJ)  
09:50 .....Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)  
10:05 .....Beirut (RJ)  
16:20 .....Cairo (RJ)  
16:25 .....London (RJ)  
16:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)  
17:00 .....Jeddah (add) (RJ)  
19:05 .....Bangkok (RJ)  
20:00 Jakarta, Abu Dhabi (add) (RJ)  
21:45 Singapore, Kuala Lumpur (add) (RJ)  
22:20 .....Casablanca (RJ)  
22:45 .....Tel Aviv (add) (RJ)  
02:45 .....Jeddah (add) (RJ)  
03:40 Singapore, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)  
05:00 .....Jeddah (add) (RJ)

### Other Flights

05:00 .....Khartoum (SD)  
09:30 .....Cairo (MS)  
12:00 .....Doha (QT)  
12:40 .....Bahrain (GF)  
15:05 .....Vienna (OS)  
21:00 .....Paris, Damascus (AF)  
21:40 .....Tel Aviv (LY)  
22:45 .....Athens, Beirut (OA)

### DEPARTURES

**Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights**  
05:45 Marka, Aqaba (add) (RJ)  
06:20 .....Beirut (RJ)  
10:00 .....Casablanca (RJ)  
11:00 .....Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)  
12:00 .....Jeddah (add) (RJ)  
12:15 .....Cairo (RJ)  
12:30 .....Frankfurt (RJ)  
20:15 .....Bahrain, Doha (RJ)  
20:15 .....Tel Aviv (add) (RJ)  
21:15 .....Dubai, Muscat (RJ)  
21:30 .....Jakarta (add) (RJ)  
21:45 .....Jeddah (add) (RJ)  
22:45 .....Sania (RJ)  
23:00 .....Damascus (RJ)  
23:45 .....Abu Dhabi (RJ)  
02:00 .....Jeddah (add) (RJ)  
05:00 .....Kuala Lumpur (add) (RJ)

### Other Flights

06:30 .....Khartoum (SD)  
07:35 .....Beirut, London (BA)  
07:45 .....Beirut (ME)  
10:20 .....Cairo (MS)  
13:00 .....Doha (QT)  
13:30 .....Bahrain (GF)  
15:50 .....Vienna (OS)  
22:50 .....Tel Aviv (LY)  
23:55 .....Damascus, Paris (AF)

### HIJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman .....8:00 am every Monday  
Dep. Damascus .....5:00 pm every Monday  
Dep. Amman .....5:00 pm every Sunday

### MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.  
Apple .....700/500  
Banana .....550/550  
Banana (imported) .....850/600  
Cabbage .....70/50  
Carrot .....300/150  
Cauliflower .....120/80  
Cucumber (large) .....280/180  
Cucumber (small) .....280/180  
Eggplant .....150/60  
Garlic .....850/600  
Grapes .....550/400  
Grape fruit .....150/100  
Lemon .....380/250  
Marrow (large) .....80/40  
Marrow (small) .....160/120  
Onion (green) .....180/120  
Onion (dry) .....170/80  
Orange .....580/400  
Pepper (hot) .....280/160  
Pepper (sweet) .....280/160  
Potato .....280/160  
Spinach .....150/100  
Spring Bean .....400/300  
Tomato .....160/120

### JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

### PROGRAMME TWO

14:05 .....The Muppet Show  
14:30 .....Comedy — Dad's Army  
16:00 Doc. — Nature's Inventions  
17:15 .....Drama — Desirine Ridge  
18:00 Magazine — Cinq Sur Cinq  
19:00 .....Le Journal  
19:15 .....Magazine — Cinq Sur Cinq  
19:30 .....News Headlines  
19:35 .....Roseanne  
20:00 Documentary — Disaster Chronicle  
20:30 .....Cinema, Cinema  
21:10 .....The Lazarus Man  
22:00 .....News in English  
22:25 .....Best Seller  
Devises & Desires  
23:15 Police drama — The Knock

### PRAYER TIMES

05:01 .....Fajr  
06:22 .....(Sunrise) Duha  
11:31 .....Dhuhr  
14:15 .....Asr  
16:38 .....Maghreb  
18:00 .....Isha

### CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifheh, Tel. 810740  
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785  
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624390

### Church of the Annunciation

Tel. 637440.

### De la Salle Church

Tel. 661757.

### Terra Sancta Church

Tel. 622366.

### Anglican Church

Tel. 652826.

### Armenian Catholic Church

Tel. 771331.

### Armenian Orthodox Church

Tel. 775261.

### St. Ephraim Church

Tel. 771751.

### Amman International Church

Tel. 827126.

### Evangelical Lutheran Church

Tel. 824328.

### German-speaking Evangelical Congregation

Tel. 845457.

### The Latter-Day Saints Tel.

654932.

### Church of Nazarene Tel.

675691.

### The Evangelical Local Church in Amman

Tel. 811295.

### English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish

Tel. 614190.

### WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology. Sunny to partly cloudy weather conditions will prevail with winds southeasterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

### Min/Max. temp.

Amman .....04/16

Aqaba .....10/23

Deserts .....03/17

Jordan Valley .....09/22







## Two suspects in slaying of Bulgarian killed in Algeria

ALGIERS (Agencies) — Two suspects in the murder of a Bulgarian national near Algiers have been killed by an army patrol, the daily Le Matin reported Sunday.

The bodies of a man and a woman, whose throats had been cut, were also found in the boot of the two men's car.

The two were intercepted last Wednesday near the forest of Bainem, not far from Algiers, where Bulgarian businessman Evdimov was found with his throat slit on Nov. 15.

They were shot and killed after refusing to obey the patrol's orders, the paper said. Evdimov's papers were later found in the car.

A search in the forest turned up two boxes of arms, clothing and documents, the paper said.

Evdimov, 55, a businessman who was military attaché at Bulgaria's embassy in Algiers between 1988 and 1989, disappeared on the morning of Nov. 15 after going out to exercise.

He was found with his throat slit in his car on the edge of the forest that evening.

His death brought to 118 the number of foreigners killed in Algiers since militant fundamentalists took up

arms against the military-backed regime following the cancellation, in January 1992, of elections the Islamic Salvation Front was set to win.

The radical Armed Islamic Group (GIA) has claimed responsibility for most of the killings.

Meanwhile, the Algerian Islamic militants issued a veiled warning to the United States Thursday for considering the expulsion of their spokesman in Washington.

Anwar Haddam, spokesman for the banned Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), faces possible expulsion from the United States following his arrest on Dec. 6, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) said.

A U.S. official said the move did not signal a change in policy toward the North African nation's bloody civil war. But an FIS leader cautioned in a letter to President Bill Clinton that relations with the United States could worsen.

"The immigration authorities' treatment of Mr. Haddam contradicts the known morals of your country and its hospitable people," Sheikh Ahmed Al Zawi, a member of the FIS governing council, said in the letter

published Thursday in the London daily Al Hayat.

"Let me call to your attention that this treatment of a well-known person does not serve the normal relations between our peoples now or in the future, when the Islamic Salvation Front rules Algeria," Sheikh Zawi said from Brussels, Belgium.

While terrorist attacks have hit Paris in reprisal for France's tacit support of Algeria's government, the United States has been perceived as taking a more nuanced view of the country's with militant Islamists.

Critics and supporters of Algeria's military-backed government often point to Mr. Haddam's presence in the United States as a sign of Washington's interest in good relations with the FIS. The party was winning Algeria's first multiparty parliamentary elections in 1992 when the army canceled them, triggering an insurgency that has killed more than 60,000 people.

The U.S. Ambassador to Algeria, Ronald Neumann, said the INS decision did not signal a change in American policy, which has supported the FIS's right to engage in politics while calling for an end to the vio-

lence.

"Haddam's situation does not represent a change in U.S. policy in any way. It is a matter for the courts and the legal system to decide" on the Algerian's right to asylum, Mr. Neumann said in a telephone interview from Algiers.

Most of the FIS's leaders are in jail or in exile since the government declared a state of emergency and banned the party. French radio said Mr. Haddam had sought refuge in the United States in 1992.

But the INS said privacy laws prevented it from confirming or denying whether the agency was ruling on an asylum for Mr. Haddam. It said only that the INS last week turned down a written request by Mr. Haddam involving his status in the U.S.

Mr. Haddam was living in the Washington area under a special status known as Advanced Parole, in which a person is allowed to leave and reenter the United States while their case is pending, an INS official said.

On Dec. 5, that status was revoked. Mr. Haddam was arrested the following day.



Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina lays a wreath Saturday at a memorial for intellectuals who were killed, many of whom on this same date in the 1971 Liberation War. Bangladesh is celebrating the silver jubilee of its independence from Pakistan (Reuters photo)

## Bangladesh starts commemorations for war victory over Pakistan

DHAKA (AFP) — Bangladesh Sunday started two days of national commemorations for the 25th anniversary of the Independence War victory over Pakistan.

Hours after making harsh remarks at Pakistan's conduct, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina Wajed Sunday highlighted the freedoms won in the nine month independence war which left an estimated three million dead.

Sheikh Hasina issued a statement saying: "The real pleasure of the victory could be derived from the alleviation of poverty, economic freedom and ensuring happiness for the poor, distressed and helpless people."

the ruling Awami League, under the leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, led the 1971 war for the independence of what was then called East Pakistan.

The Pakistani army surrendered to joint Bangladesh-India forces on Dec. 16, 1971 after the bitter conflict.

Ties with Pakistan are now considered "warm" but a nationalist fever has swept the country as the anniversary has approached. On Saturday the prime minister attacked Pakistan over the dozens of Bangladeshi intellectuals killed during

the war. Pakistan's motto was "keep the land, not the people," she said in unveiling a memorial to the intellectuals. Her remarks were the most severe toward Islamabad since Sheikh Hasina came to office in June.

Prayers were to be said in mosques, churches and temples nationwide Monday to seek "peace, happiness and progress" in Bangladesh, which since independence has seen multiple coups or coup attempts.

Sheikh Hasina, who is also the defence minister, is to review a military parade and lay the foundation of a victory monument at the place where the Pakistanis signed the document of surrender.

State-run television has been showing rare, often previously banned films, about the conflict in recent days. Talk shows, dramas and movies all centre on the 1971 war.

The government has pardoned a "large number" of prisoners to commemorate the anniversary, and the Defence Ministry said 65 military personnel had been made "honorary officers" in another commemorative gesture.

Sheikh Hasina opened a children's rally at Dhaka's main stadium to kick off the celebrations.

There were fewer vehicles on the roads because of the special national holiday. Streets have been repainted and special illuminations put on major buildings to be lit up Sunday night, despite the country's acute power shortages.

Various political and social groups have been holding ceremonies and commemorative events for several days, increasing traffic problems for the eight million population of Dhaka.

Khaleda Zia, head of the opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party, issued her own statement calling for the consolidation of the independence that cost millions of lives.

The mass circulation Ittefaq newspaper commented that the "time has come for introspection."

It added: "In reality the freedom fight never ends. War ends, but its spirit lives on (and) if we can uphold this spirit we can be a prosperous nation."

The Bangladesh Observer said that in the "celebration of triumph... we have cause to recall today with a potent mixture of pride and sorrow."

"The pride comes in the knowledge that brave men and women gave away their future in the interest of our present," it said.

## Cambodia's Hun Sen threatens war if exiled prince returns

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen said Sunday he was prepared to launch military action if the half-brother of King Norodom Sihanouk returned to the country.

His warning that military forces were on standby stepped up spiralling political tension between Hun Sen and the royalist FUNCINPEC of his Co-Prime Minister Prince Norodom Ranariddh.

Mr. Hun Sen, who is officially second prime minister, said an attack would be mounted if Prince Norodom Sirivudh returned to the country and brought closer a military challenge to troops loyal to Hun Sen's Cambodian People's Party (CPP).

"I have ordered 45 tanks to be prepared if (Prince Sirivudh) returns," Mr. Hun Sen said in a speech broadcast on national radio and television. "They will be ready to attack."

He added that BM-21 multiple rocket launchers had already been pointed at Phnom Penh's Pochentong International Airport and that any airline that carried Prince Sirivudh back to Cambodia "will be in trouble."

"Prince Sirivudh is a step to war in Cambodia again," he said.

Prince Sirivudh, Cambodia's former foreign minister and the former secretary-general of FUNCINPEC, was exiled last December to France for allegedly plotting to assassinate Hun Sen, president of the CPP.

In February, the prince was convicted of criminal conspiracy and illegal weapons possession charges related to the alleged plot

and sentenced to 10 years in prison in absentia.

His return has been the subject of much contention between FUNCINPEC and the CPP, the major partners in the coalition government, whose feuding in recent weeks has resulted in several instances of factional fighting in the provinces.

Senior FUNCINPEC officials, including party president and First Prime Minister Prince Ranariddh, have said they support a royal pardon for Prince Sirivudh and have offered him protection if and when he returns.

CPP officials, including National Police Director Hok Longdy, have warned that the prince would be arrested on his arrival.

"This is not a small issue," Mr. Hun Sen said in his speech.

"BM-21 multiple rocket launchers are already pointed in the direction of Pochentong Airport. If he comes, we will attack."

Mr. Hun Sen also berated FUNCINPEC for threatening to retaliate with 10 B-40 rockets for every bullet the CPP might fire at them.

"Please meet and show off your muscles, but I will fight," he said.

Human rights officials and lawyers who attended Prince Sirivudh's trial said the proceeding was not a fair one and that the evidence presented could not reasonably have proved the prosecution's case.

Prince Sirivudh, who has vehemently denied the charges and termed his trial a "mockery," has repeatedly said he would return to Cambodia and hinted he might come back on Dec. 21, the first anniversary of his exile.

Despite the hints, the prince has not confirmed a return date.

Mr. Hun Sen claimed Sunday that "99 per cent" of thousands of recent Khmer Rouge defectors have joined his political party to the detriment of his rivals.

The claim, made in a speech broadcast on national radio and television, ends months of vehement public denials that the defectors were being courted for their political and military strength by Hun Sen's former Communist Cambodian People's Party and the royalist FUNCINPEC party.

The courtship has seriously strained the relationship between the parties and their leaders.

Officials from both parties have threatened military responses to perceived attacks from the other but Mr. Hun Sen warned FUNCINPEC not to underestimate the CPP's strength.

"They may think they know us, but probably they don't know us very well. They should not forget that for 14 years they couldn't overthrow us," he said.

Referring to the FUNCINPEC-led resistance to Hanouk-installed Phnom Penh governments in the 1980s.

"Now, I can say that 99 per cent of the renegade (Khmer Rouge) have joined with the CPP. They have not joined with the other parties."

Hun Sen and the CPP had frequently accused FUNCINPEC officials of trying to re-create the resistance movement by recruiting former Khmer Rouge to join them.

"They are in a difficult position because both the guerrillas in the jungle and the underground forces have joined the CPP and this is their political right," he boasted.

## Suu Kyi will not accept restrictions on her movement

RANGOON (AFP) — Opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi has indicated that she will not accept restrictions on her movements as she spent the ninth consecutive day Sunday inside her Rangoon residence, following the most defiant civilian protests here since 1988.

With security still tight around the city following the demonstrations, her National League for Democracy (NLD) fired back against official claims that the Nobel Peace Prize laureate had failed to cooperate with authorities in measures designed to insure her own safety.

"A serious request should not take on the nature of a restrictive order nor should it entail the placement of physical barriers," said a statement signed by the NLD Central Executive Committee, received by AFP Sunday.

Her residence on Rangoon's University Avenue has been blockaded since the demonstrations for students' rights began on the city's streets two weeks ago. The NLD leader has not left her house since last Friday.

In response to a government statement circulated to embassies in Rangoon earlier in the week, the opposition leader, who was confined by the ruling junta to her own home for six years until her release last July, denied she had said her current confinement constituted house arrest.

"At no time did she claim that she had been put under 'house restriction,' however she pointed out that restrictions placed on her movement amount to unlawful restraint," said the statement, dated Dec. 12.

The statement further rebutted accusations from the ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) that the NLD was connected to the student unrest. High-ranking junta officials have compared the recent demonstrations to the civilian pro-democracy demonstrations of 1988 which were crushed by the military.

"The NLD supports all calls for justice and human rights and we sympathise with the grievances of the students but we strongly protest against unsubstantiated accusations," said the statement.

In the past two weeks, students have demonstrated in the city's streets for the release of student prisoners and the right to set up a union.

While they have no mention of Ms. Suu Kyi, protesters have carried a portrait of her late father, the Burmese independence hero Aung San, and chanted pro-democracy slogans.

Rangoon was quiet Sunday although there was still a high security presence and restrictions on access to the Yangon (Rangoon) Institute of Technology in the north of the city and at the Institute of Medicine downtown.

Armed troops have been patrolling the city at night-time and five tanks that were driven into the city Friday were still parked in front of City Hall, with combat-ready soldiers.

Burmese observers said that the tanks were intended as a show of force to deter students still staying in the city. Most students have been sent home, after their classes were suspended at the start of the week.

Students staged a daring march through the city two weeks ago and up to 1,000 protesters gathered for a sit-down protest by the main university campus last Friday night, which was violently broken up by riot police and troops.

This was followed by a wave of smaller student demonstrations, which now appear to have subsided, as authorities have sought to isolate campuses and prevent protesters from regrouping.

## Northern Irish Unionists 'will not rock Major's boat'

LONDON (R) — Northern Irish Protestant politicians, who could hold the fate of Prime Minister John Major's minority government in their hands, Sunday pledged not to be "capricious and irresponsible" in key parliamentary votes.

Mr. Major, trailing badly in opinion polls, lost his majority last week after suffering a crushing by-election defeat.

But the beleaguered premier insisted he would soldier on and not call a snap general election.

The Ulster Unionists, who want to maintain Northern Ireland's links with Britain, have nine seats in the House of Commons. Their parliamentary strategy is now crucial to Mr. Major's survival. He has to call an election by next May.

Mr. Major's first big test as leader of a minority government comes Monday with a key vote on the government's negotiating stance in the European Union on fisheries.

Ulster Unionist David Trimble said: "It's only a

matter of weeks now to the point at which parliament will be dissolved (for the Christmas recess) and in that period of time we're not going to behave in a capricious or irresponsible manner."

The party leader, reiterating his view that the Ulster Unionists will look at each issue on its merits, told GMTV: "We'll be listening carefully to what is said Monday and then deciding what we do in the light of that."

The latest opinion poll in the Sunday Times showed what a mountain Mr. Major has to climb if he is to keep his Conservatives in power, a party which has been beset by defections, resignations and feuds over Britain's role in Europe.

The poll showed the main opposition Labour Party won the support of 50 per cent of voters compared to 31 per cent for the Conservatives and 14 per cent for the centrist Liberal Democrats.

The Liberal Democrats' party manager Archy Kirk-

wood claimed in the Sunday Telegraph that up to 12 Conservatives have approached the centrists about the possibility of defecting.

He refused to name the waverers but said he had received "informal, direct and indirect contact with a number of them."

Labour's by-election victory in the northern England seat of Barnsley East last week means the 323 Conservative members of parliament are matched by the number of opposition lawmakers.

Mr. Major hopes to delay calling an election for as long as possible in the hope that Britain's resurgent economy will give voters the elusive "feel-good factor" that could ensure the Conservatives a fifth consecutive election victory.

But Mr. Major, back from an EU summit in Dublin that left him isolated in the push for greater monetary integration, knows he faces a titanic struggle to contain the Eurosceptic rebels who threaten to pull his party apart.

## Russia warns Chechenya hostages could halt pullout

MOSCOW (R) — Russian officials warned Chechen separatist leaders Sunday that the capture of 22 Russian soldiers could halt Moscow's military withdrawal from the region, news agencies said.

About 65 Chechen fighters seized the Russians Saturday near the Dagestan-Chechenya border, RIA news agency quoted Anatoly Shirko, commander of the Russian Interior Ministry Forces, as saying.

This latest hostage taking "has seriously complicated the withdrawal of Russian troops" from Chechenya, Gen. Shirko said.

Two years after it launched a full-scale military assault on Chechenya to quash the region's moves towards independence, Russia last month agreed to pull out its remaining troops from the region.

Three top Russian officials in the region overseeing Chechen policy sent Chechenya's president a memorandum warning a continuation of the hostage situation could halt the troop withdrawal, Interfax News Agency said.

"These provocations could have irreparable consequences that could lead up to stopping the withdrawal of federal forces and the peace process in Chechenya as a whole," the agency quoted the document as saying.

Chechen leaders, anxious to secure that Russian troops leave the region before a general election scheduled for Jan. 27, have denounced similar incidents in the past and moved to resolve them quickly.

A top Chechen official said he hoped the Russian Interior Ministry soldiers would be released Sunday.

"As far as I know, nothing threatens the lives of these policemen, our government officials are there," First Deputy Prime Minister Movladi Udugov told Russian Television.

"I think we'll sort out the situation today and the problem will be solved."

The 22 Russian Interior Ministry troops were seized after the Chechens arrived at the Chechen-Dagestan border with a group of women and children. Gen. Shirko told RIA.

## Families to press TWA for compensation

WASHINGTON (R) — Families of victims of last summer's crash of TWA Flight 800 said Saturday they will press TWA for immediate compensation.

Their announcement came after about 100 family members met with U.S. officials investigating the July 17 explosion of the Trans World Airline (TWA) Boeing 747 off New York's Long Island, killing all 230 people on board.

After the briefing the family members said despite briefings by federal investigators they still had key questions about what happened.

On Friday the National Transportation Safety Board said a buildup of volatile vapours in the 747's partially full centre fuel tank could have triggered the explosion.

But it stopped short of blaming the explosion of the New York-to-Paris flight on mechanical failure, a bomb or a missile, and issued urgent recommendations to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to prevent any such future explosions.

A spokesman for the families, Jose Cremades, said a representative would meet with Trans World Airlines officials Monday to press for funds to help families whose main wage earner was killed in the crash.

Mr. Cremades said many family members were encountering financial hardship since the crash five months ago.

He also said members agreed that claims they file for the \$75,000 compensation authorised under the Warsaw Convention for deaths in international aviation would not resolve any other claims they might make.

"This does not preclude anything else," said Mr. Cremades, who lost a 15-year-old son in the crash.

Several lawsuits have already been filed claiming damages.

Mr. Cremades told a news conference the families also agreed a memorial should be built for the victims, but a place and its financing had not been decided.

"The wounds are still bleeding," he said. "The persons lost in this plane are still very present in our minds."

Asked about the meetings with the investigators from the board, the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the navy, he said "the general feeling was that the briefing was worthwhile, but there was not a lot of new information."

"The key issues that we wanted to find answers to have not been answered. Maybe they cannot be answered now," he said.

Mr. Cremades said the families they did not know whether the 747, made by Boeing Co., was brought down by mechanical failure, bomb or missile.

The board called on the FAA to issue orders to assure against vapour build up and any aircraft design changes necessary.

The FAA said it would urgently review the recommendations. Boeing said it would comply with any FAA directives issued.

TWA's New York-to-Paris flight went down shortly after takeoff. The navy salvaged more than 90 per cent of the plane's wreckage.

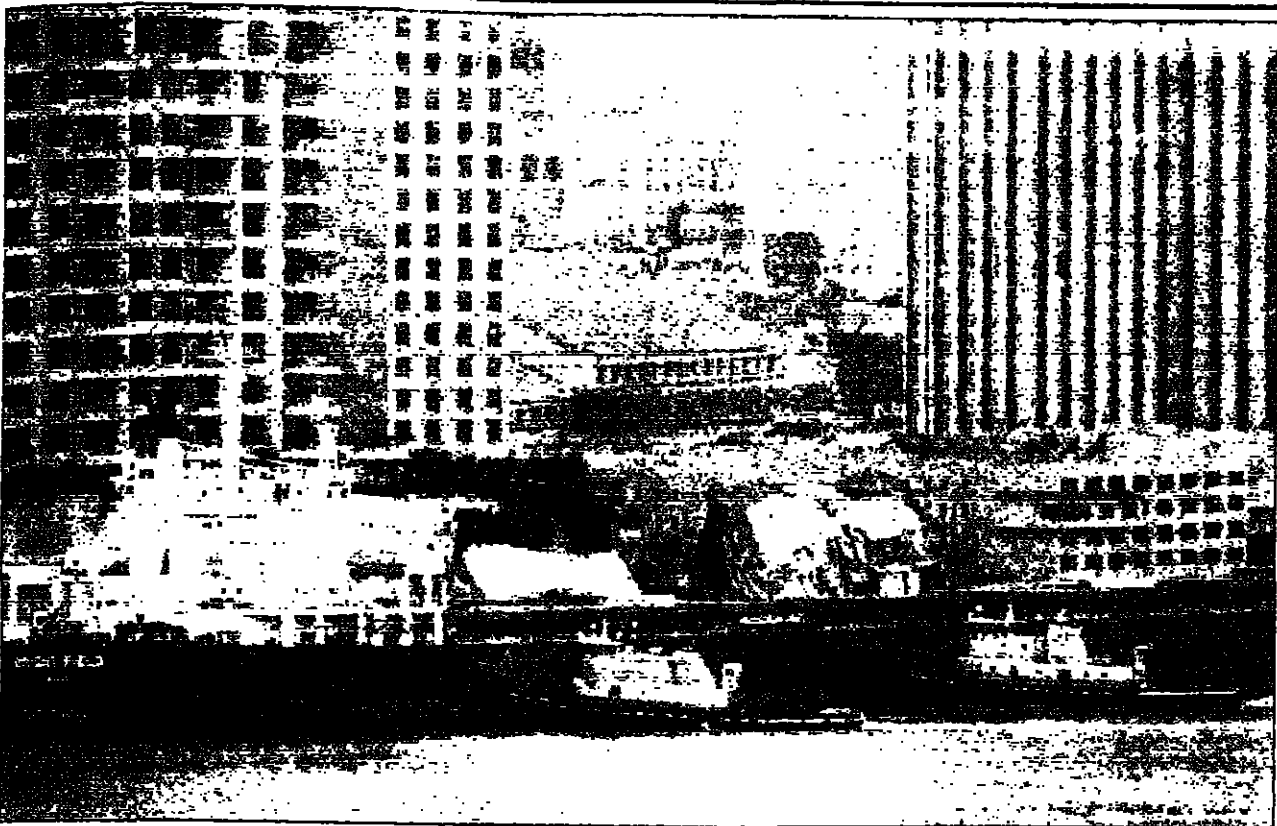
Mr. Cremades said the investigators told the families they had recovered about all of the centre fuel tank, "but have not found any evidence of damage by a missile or a bomb."

Asked about recurring theories that it was struck by a missile shortly after takeoff, he said the investigators told them they had found no sign of a missile or bomb.

But, he said, "they are running missile tests in California."

While the board said in its report that evidence from the wreckage was "consistent" with a fuel tank explosion, it stopped short of blaming the crash on mechanical reasons.





A ship which crashed into the River Walk shopping centre in New Orleans is shown near the structures it damaged along the Mississippi River Saturday. At least six people were killed when the Liberian-registered freighter MV Brightfield's bow slammed into the elevated strip of expensive stores overlooking the Mississippi River (Reuters photo)

## Ship crashes into New Orleans riverfront mall

NEW ORLEANS (R) — A freighter loaded with grain slammed into a crowded riverfront casino and shopping area Saturday in New Orleans after apparently losing power as it headed out to sea, officials said.

Dozens of people were injured as ceilings gave way in the upscale New Orleans Riverwalk Shopping Mall along the Mississippi River. The Coast Guard was using infrared scanners to search for possible victims in the fast-moving water and the rubble of the mall, but officials said there were

known fatalities in the afternoon accident.

"The latest news is that there are no confirmed fatalities," New Orleans Mayor Marc Morial said. "They've conducted for several hours search and rescue operations, but have not as yet been able to locate anything, so we have our fingers crossed that in the end there won't be any fatalities."

Mayoral spokeswoman Michele Moore said 111 people were treated at hospitals, mostly for minor injuries. Two people had serious injuries.

Harbour Police and U.S. Coast Guard spokesmen initially reported as many as six dead in the accident, which occurred while the mall was filled with tourists and holiday shoppers.

Witnesses said the Liberian-registered freighter MV Brightfield was sounding warnings with blasts from its horn and shot a flare into the sky just before its bow slammed into the elevated strip of stores overlooking the river.

"We saw the boat coming right towards us. I thought it was just going to dock.

Then I realised that it was out of control, and I saw it just about before it hit the dock and then it came through the window of that cajun shop and then the roof collapsed on top of us," said one tourist, scratched but otherwise unhurt.

The ship hit the Riverwalk Wharf from the left side of its bow and then scraped along the seawall, finally stopping parallel to the wall. Tugs were holding the ship in place while rescuers searched for victims, and the ship's hull appeared to be holding up the heavily damaged structure.

## 1 killed, 18 injured in Swiss cable car crash

ZURICH (R) — Skiers screamed and teared for their lives when a malfunction sent their cable cars crashing onto a Swiss mountainside at the weekend, crushing a local guide.

Authorities blamed a broken axle on a giant winch for suddenly releasing tension on the cable, sending three gondolas plummeting to the ground Saturday at Riederalp in the southwestern canton of Valais.

"Eighteen people were injured, two of them seriously. It was terrible," Fritz Mueller, 61, told the Sonntagsblick newspaper. "We plunged without any warning. Everyone was screaming. We hit the ground several times and then were catapulted back up."

His daughter Silvia added: "I screamed the whole time. And I thought: this is the end. I am going to die."

Former Swiss ski acrobat Art Furrer, who owns a hotel in the resort, skied down the mountain after the accident to comfort the injured Swiss and German skiers.

"Most of the people in the gondolas were covered with blood," he told the newspaper.

At one point, he found a pair of ski boots under one car. They belonged to his friend Franz-Xaver Leiggener, 36, a local ski instructor and mountain guide who was crushed to death.

"I could only cry," Mr. Furrer recalled.

## OSCE would face difficulties in Belgrade mediation bid

BELGRADE (Agencies) — Western mediators risk being drawn into a dispute between President Slobodan Milosevic and the Serbian opposition in which the two sides are standing firm on irreconcilable demands over last month's local elections.

The independent Serbian news agency Fonet, citing State Department sources in Washington, said Sunday that a delegation of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, comprising representatives of several European countries, the United States and Canada, was due in Belgrade within a week at the latest.

The OSCE has been invited by Mr. Milosevic to send mediators to Belgrade to find a way out of the crisis in which hundreds of thousands of demonstrators have taken to the streets daily to protest at the cancellation of elections the opposition was initially declared to have won.

Opposition leaders are standing by their demand that the results of the Nov. 17 be upheld and rejecting talks with the authorities unless the poll results are ratified.

Mr. Milosevic, while apparently extending an olive branch with his mediation offer, has shown no sign of accepting a humiliating climbdown on the election results.

The New Democracy Party, allied to Mr. Milosevic's Socialist (SPS) party, said Sunday it expected the OSCE mission to "clear numerous illusions, not only those of local potentates — a reference to SPS officials who have refused to acknowledge their electoral defeat — But also those of the opposition."

The mission "must state the truth about the election(s) and restore peace and confidence in institutions."

The opposition however was keeping up the momentum of its protests, with at least 200,000 people turning out Saturday for the 26th straight day of protests, and a further demonstration expected Sunday, and Washington expressed doubt that an OSCE mission would help to ease the crisis.

However State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said Friday the United States would think over the Serbian invitation to the OSCE, adding that any delegation to Belgrade should be led by a "prominent international figure."

The 15 heads of state and government of the European Union meeting in Dublin last week expressed approval of the mediation mission.

Belgrade is counting on the Western perception of its crucial role in upholding the Dayton Peace Accords in Bosnia-Herzegovina to ensure support for its stance, and the daily Novosti Sunday quoted a statement by the senior civilian representative in Bosnia, Carl Bildt, warning that "the international community has no interest in seeing Serbia collapse."

The Serbian opposition, which has received numerous expressions of support from the West, is also counting on international pressure to force a climbdown from Mr. Milosevic. On Saturday Mr. Bildt's deputy Michael Steiner said that the world community should support the opposition demands, which were "perfectly legitimate."

The Belgrade authorities in return have accused the opposition of seeking financial aid from the United States, and on Friday the Yugoslav Left, the party of Mr. Milosevic's influential wife Mira Markovic, urged "topping an investigation to determine if the opposition parties has been financed and politically supported from abroad."

Some diplomats fear too much pressure on Mr. Milosevic could cause a bloodbath in Serbia, an image the authorities are quietly keen to foster as a deterrent to the opposition. But police have so far kept a low profile in face of the protests.

In addition to the Belgrade demonstrations, thousands of people held pro-

tests in 17 major towns and cities which with their industrial and cultural resources make up the so-called backbone of Serbia, independent reports said.

The authorities, minimising the size of the protests, argued that the number of demonstrators accounted for less than 10 per cent of Belgrade's population of two million or Serbia's population of 10 million.

But Mr. Milosevic's chances of sitting out the crisis and the demonstration dead down appeared to be fading in view of the tenacity of the opposition and its attraction to many people still reluctant to officially join the protests.

"Not only they are not diminishing, but they are gradually growing in size and spreading across Serbia. Mr. Milosevic will have to make his move very soon," a Western diplomat said.

One of the opposition leaders, Zoran Djindjic, said: "We are at the beginning of a long road to the future — we can discuss the pace at which we will move, but definitely not the direction."

Vuk Draskovic, another opposition leader, said: "We had all lost all hope as individuals, but together we restored that hope. All of Serbia will soon be out in the streets."

## Taleban set conditions for ceasefire talks

KABUL (R) — The radical Islamic Taleban Movement said Sunday it would take part in talks on a ceasefire in Afghanistan's factional warfare on condition no action was taken against its administration or Islamic Law.

"We have conditions for negotiations and a ceasefire," the acting information minister in the Taleban administration, Amir Khan Muttaqi, told

journalists in Kabul.

"Nobody should do anything against the establishment of the Islamic government which is already in place or oppose the implementation of Sharia (Islamic Law)."

"If these points are accepted, we are ready for any kind of negotiations."

He also rejected an opposition demand that the capital

should be demilitarised.

The head of the U.N. Special Mission to Afghanistan, Dr. Norbert Holth, has been shuttling between the warring factions in an attempt to get them to sit down together to find a peaceful solution to the fighting.

The acting foreign minister in the Taleban administration met a representative of northern Afghan leader General

Abdul Rashid Dostum in Pakistan last month for what the United Nations described as "technical-level discussions."

The United Nations said the meeting was amicable but that no firm conclusions were reached.

The United Nations proposes that three representatives of the Taleban should meet three representatives of the opposition.

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## Battle to be won

THE EUROPEAN Union's (EU) reaction to Israel's decision to boost settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories stressed an extremely significant point in the search for peace in the Middle East. In addition to condemning the building of settlements as a violation of international law and a major obstacle to peace, the EU's Dublin summit warned in a statement Saturday that the Israeli cabinet's decision to expand settlements has the dangerous impact of eroding confidence in the peace process.

The European statement reflects a growing understanding of the complexities of the efforts to build comprehensive peace in the region. It touches on the most important element without which peace cannot be attained: Building peace needs mutual confidence.

This is exactly what the new Likud-led Israeli government seems to be working against. The Israeli stand on Hebron, the reneging on commitments and the adamant refusal to heed the voice of reason are resulting in more than just delaying the peace process. They are subjecting the whole process to failure by injecting doubts and suspicion in the region's atmosphere.

The Arabs cannot build peace with a party they do not trust. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is giving reason after another to the Arabs to doubt his commitment to peace. He has to stop.

Peace should not be left to the hardline ideologies and whims of a politician who has thus far demonstrated little willingness to get the peace process moving and even less understanding of the area and its needs.

The Israelis have as much stake in the success of the peace process as do the Arabs. But the international community also has an interest in having peace and stability prevail in the region. Accordingly, the international community has to do its share in helping resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The European reaction to the decision to expand settlements is a positive one. But it will not help unless it is followed up by actions that can affect the Israeli policies. Despite Israel's rejection of a European role in the peace process, the continent is an important economic partner of Israel. Europe can use economic pressure to push Israel towards a less antagonistic position towards the peace process.

By doing that, Europe will not just be helping the Palestinians who have suffered more than enough from Israeli occupation and arrogance. The EU will be helping the Israeli people who can only benefit from peace and will be helping itself and protecting its clear interests in the region. Saving the peace is a battle that must be taken by all those who can help win it.

## ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE JORDANIAN Al Mustakbal political party's call for a conference in Amman this week of political parties in the Arab World came under scrutiny from a writer for Al Ra'i daily who said the unprecedented meeting comes at a moment when the Arab countries are in disarray and facing a dismal future. Mufid Nahleh said the call for the meeting reflects Jordan's concern over the pan-Arab situation in light of the challenges posed to the nation by Israel's policies and prompted by the desire, on the part of Jordanian political groups, to revive solidarity among Arab regimes. The meeting would come at a time when relations among some of these regimes are badly deteriorated, as a result of the past events in the Arab region, and so the political parties meeting here are called on to put forth ideas and proposals that can help reunify Arab ranks. He added, there is no doubt that the political parties which represent the left, the right and the centre realise too well the general situation prevailing in the Arab World and the dangers posed to the Arabs by Israel's practices, but so far they have proved impotent in dealing with this situation, perhaps because they have been acting individually, said the writer. He said that by taking a collective stand, these parties could help Arab regimes transcend the present differences and divisions and embark on concrete actions to save their nation.

A WRITER for Al Dustour called the attention of the Ministry of Health to the need of extending help to the Jordan University Hospital whose services, he said, have been shrinking and deteriorating due to growing pressure and depleted resources. Mohammad Daoud said that despite the loans and grants which the hospital has been receiving, its general situation is a source of concern to the staff and the patients alike. The loans and other kind of assistance have failed to bring about the required improvement and many of the equipment which has been recently installed in the hospital proved no better than the old one, often breaking down and depriving patients of the needed care and treatment, charged the writer. He pointed out that many of the drugs are often in short supply, that many of the qualified doctors and nurses quit their jobs seeking better positions elsewhere and that the hospital lacks efficient management. The writer said that only a miracle can solve these problems if the ministry fails to come to the hospital's rescue.

## Economic Review

By Dr. Yusuf Mansur

## Jordan will benefit from opening its capital markets to foreign investors

JORDAN IS viewed by many as an emerging market, a fact it always emphasises. However, with such advertising comes fame and the risk of attracting international stock market brokers. As in all stock markets of emerging economies (considered as gold mines by international investors) the Amman Financial Market (AFM) will soon become a source of apprehension to policy makers as they weigh the risks and advantages of having Jordanian stocks accessed by international investors.

On the one hand, opening the AFM to foreign investment funds will be viewed by many as a clear signal of Jordan's intent to globalise the economy and bring forth a new source of increased demand for Jordanian stocks, which should raise the prices of those stocks that are rated highly by international brokers.

On the other hand, international investors can subject the AFM to external risks, that will be beyond the control of the Jordanian market and institutional forces.

The Securities Law, which has recently been approved by the Cabinet, is an excellent example of one of the positive steps taken by the government, the AFM and the nation at large towards becoming an internationally competitive country.

By streamlining procedures and standardising practices to make them consistent with international standards Jordan is opening its stock market to those wary legions of highly paid stockbrokers in London and New York who are also more technically and financially capable than most of the domestic investors. (Already, the stocks of one Jordanian, two Egyptian and 75 Israeli firms are listed on the New York Stock Exchange NYSE).

The June-July fluctuations of the Wall Street have stirred old fears among policy makers in most developing countries of opening up their domestic stock markets, in

which over 19,000 stocks are listed, to foreign investors, especially that share prices will become volatile, causing wild swings at the first sign of trouble.

Small problems can be escalated to great magnitudes, sometimes unnecessarily, as footloose investors cash their funds and disappear. Should Jordan reverse its policy? According to the World Bank research paper "Stock markets, banks and economic growth," which attempted to address the question of stock market development and economic development, the answer is negative.

The authors of the article, upon reviewing stock markets in 49 countries over 28 years, have determined the following:

- Liquidity of the stock market is very closely related to economic growth. Savers prefer highly liquid markets which allow them the opportunity to sell their shares easily if they want to and where firms are allowed access to long-term capital through issuing equities. Thus, liquid markets are able to attract more funds than other markets.

- According to the study, countries with highly liquid stock markets have enjoyed higher rates of growth and higher productivity growth than countries with relatively low liquidity markets.

- There is no strong link between the size of the stock market and economic growth. In other words, the capitalisation ratio that some analysts view so highly has no seeming effect on the growth of the economy.

- There is no strong link between stock market volatility and economic growth. The increase in volatility, due to liberalisation of capital markets, is short term and has little or no effect on growth. However, since the increase in liquidity is strongly related to economic growth, it will be advantageous for Jordan, in the long run, to open its capital markets to foreign investors.

## Storm erupts over Bar-Illan's criticism of U.S. columnist

By David Makovsky

The following article is reprinted from the Dec. 5, 1996 issue of the Jerusalem Post:

THERE WAS angry reaction last night to remarks made by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's Communication Director David Bar-Illan, who branded New York Times foreign affairs columnist Tom Friedman "an anti-Zionist" and someone whom he hoped would not be invited to address American Jewish organisational functions.

When reached for reaction last night, Bar-Illan stood firmly behind his characterisation of Friedman, but denied that he pressured any organisation not to invite the columnist as a speaker.

Abraham Foxman, inter-

national director of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL), said such remarks were a "sad day for Israel," and voiced hope that the Netanyahu government was not developing "enemies list" as existed during the Nixon administration. Foxman noted that the ADL invited Netanyahu to speak when he was in the opposition, when there were voices urging that he not be invited.

Zalman Shoval, ambassador to Washington during the Shamir government, said last night: "Often, I did not and do not agree with Tom's views, such as his persistent support of Labour during our election campaign. However, I never thought he was hostile to Israel. To the contrary, I respected his intellectual honesty. He was one of the journalists whom I met with on a regular basis in

Washington. The question of him being invited to an ADL dinner is an internal American Jewish affair, and none of the state of Israel's business."

Teddy Kollek, former mayor of Jerusalem, said: "From the articles I read, my sense is that Friedman calls it like he sees it. His writing style often illuminates the broader picture. You cannot say that he is an anti-Zionist. You cannot say that everyone who does not agree with us 100 per cent is immediately tarnished with a brush of being a permanent opponent."

The name-calling began after one of the heads of the Zionist Organisation of America objected to Friedman addressing the ADL. An American Jewish weekly newspaper followed up by contacting Bar-Illan, and asked him to comment. Last night, Bar-Illan

defended his stance, but denied contacting any Jewish organisation.

"The Forward called me last week and asked if I thought it was a good choice to invite Friedman to be a keynote speaker at the annual ADL dinner. My personal opinion is no, but I would never think of trying to talking the ADL out of inviting him."

"It is my opinion that Friedman is an anti-Zionist. Anybody who writes that the administration needs someone like Jim Baker to twist the arms and break the knuckles of Israel's prime minister and dismisses the security concerns of Israel is, in my view, an anti-Zionist period."

Ironically, earlier this week Friedman was the guest at a dinner given by Netanyahu's envoy to Washington, Eliyahu Ben-Elissur.

## Hamas leans towards pragmatic approach to Israel

By Wafa Amr

GAZA (R) — After a long internal debate, the Islamic Hamas movement in Gaza is leaning towards a pragmatic approach to Israel and away from the more militant positions of its leadership in exile. Hamas officials said on Sunday.

Members of the group, which is behind suicide bombings against Israelis aimed at wrecking Israel-Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) peace agreements, announced at a rally in Gaza on Friday guidelines of a new political programme advocating peaceful opposition to the deals.

"We will not use violence to oppose Oslo agreements," Sayyed Abu Musameh, among the group's most influential figures in Gaza, told Reuters.

Hamas officials said they expected the programme to be opposed by hardliners in the West Bank and Gaza and abroad, but were keen on maintaining relations with the leadership in exile which dominates financial matters and international relations.

Officials said the programme did not mention jihad (holy war or struggle) against Israel, but fell short of clearly stating that current policy was to freeze military activities because leaders feared a backlash from Hamas hawks and needed time to explain the new policies to the group's grassroots supporters.

Hamas leaders, also announced that the group in Gaza would elect a new politburo.

"We have taken the first step

towards moving the decision-making power to Gaza and the West Bank and towards transforming into a pragmatic movement on the ground, whereby Hamas will deal more with political issues," Hamas official Ghazi Hamad told Reuters.

Hamas, created in the Gaza Strip by the politically passive Muslim Brotherhood in 1987, views interim PLO-Israel peace deals beginning with the 1993 Oslo agreement as a sellout because they did not give Palestinians their own state.

The group's charter calls for jihad as the only means to liberate all of what was the British mandate Palestine and does not recognise the state of Israel.

A simultaneous crackdown on Hamas by Israel and the PLO following suicide attacks that killed scores of Israelis in February and March weakened the group and deepened divisions between pragmatists and hawks.

The pragmatists wanted to freeze attacks, saying they led to the group's marginalisation.

Hamas officials said the call by exiled leaders to continue confrontational policies harmed members of the group living under occupation and in Palestinian self-rule areas.

"Hamas was undergoing a development process in line with changes surrounding it, however we are not trying to isolate the leadership in exile because it is part of the movement," said the group's spokesman Mahmoud Al Zahhar.

"Hamas' new political vision stems from the fact that it is not a rigid movement. It

started out as Muslim Brotherhood with preaching duties during the phase of establishing its institutions. Then it used the gun when it was needed. Now it is also changing," he told Reuters.

The modified programme announced on Friday contained parts of the 1987 Hamas charter and new elements including:

- Recognising the establishment of a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with Arab East Jerusalem as its capital and considering the liberation of any occupied land an achievement.

- Accepting the principle of peace with Israel to achieve comprehensive peace in the region.

- Peaceful opposition to PLO-Israeli peace deals and reconciliation with the Palestinian National Authority.

Mr. Abu Musameh said a decision on military activities would be announced by the movement's top leadership.

Hamas officials said that while jihad was a basic principle of Islam, it should not be activated if it caused Muslims more harm than good.

## LETTERS

### No betrayal of trust

To the Editor:

IT WAS with great concern that I read the article "Petra in danger of natural collapse, geologist warns: conservation group attempts to remedy situation" (Jordan Times, Dec. 7, 1996) on the dangers of collapse of the monuments in Petra. Having just returned from a week-long, most enjoyable visit to Petra, I can confirm Dr. Fischer's findings of advanced water erosion affecting a great number of Petra's façades.

In light of the plans to expand water supply to new hotels in the Petra region, it is of the utmost importance that an overriding priority be given to Petra's long-term preservation rather than to short-term increases in tourist revenue.

Jordan holds in trust for the world one of the most significant sites in human history whose conservation has become a matter of urgency. The Jordanian authorities should give their full support to the joint Jordanian-German project for the preservation and restoration of one of the great wonders of the world.

David Stephens,  
Belgium.

## Human Rights File

## 'Jordanians are part of the Arab Nation'

By Waleed M. Sadi

THE JORDANIAN Constitution states in Article 1 that

Jordanians are an integral part of the Arab Nation. Article 24(1) stipulates that the people are the source of authority. We all know that the Constitution's provisions are supreme and supersede every other law, whether domestic or treaty law, and all policy considerations. That being the case, what are the legal and political implications of these provisions on the conduct of Jordan's foreign policy vis-à-vis the other Arab states and peoples, on one hand, and the state of Israel, with which it signed a peace treaty, on the other?

If the reference to Jordanians as part of the Arab Nation is only an article of abstract faith in the Arab Nation and the ultimate goal of Arab unity, with no legal or political ramifications intended, then the constitutional issue on this subject becomes benign.

It must be recalled that the Constitution was drafted and adopted when the legacy of the Great Arab Revolution of Sharif Hussein was still fresh in our minds. Those were the times when Arab nationalism and Arab unification were still prime movers in Arab thinking.

Much time has elapsed since those early days, and one barely hears anything nowadays about Arab nationalism or Arab unity, as if they were relics of the idealistic past better kept dormant.

If this view is a faithful reflection of current events and circumstances in the Arab World, then the proposition that Jordanians are part of the Arab Nation carries little legal or political weight in these modern times. It also means that Jordan's Constitution does not stipulate absolute legal and political responsibilities towards the other Arab peoples and countries.

If the contrary opinion is upheld instead, namely, that the first and second articles of the Constitution are so organic that they are still alive and relevant for all times, then their implications need to be articulated and measured anew to see how they may be relevant to contemporary inter-Arab relations or, better still, how this article of faith in the Arab Nation would affect the peace treaty with Israel should Arab-Israeli relations become strained once again and should an armed conflict flare up.

Egypt recently stated that it may not stay idle should a war break out between Israel and Syria, even though it has signed and ratified a peace treaty in 1979. There is no way to tell how serious this pronouncement is and whether, in fact, Cairo is willing or able to wage war against Israel if bad comes to worst and Syria and Israel find themselves engulfed in a major war.

The likelihood of a war breaking out between Israel and Syria, though, is no more remote or far-fetched. But the likelihood of Cairo joining the battlefield may or may not be just a figment of imagination. Most probably, though, there is not much that the Egyptian armed forces can do, even if they wanted to, as long as the Sinai desert remains off limits to them under the peace treaty with Israel.

The Egyptian declaration of support to Syria in case of a war breaking out naturally caused an uproar in Israel but soon dissipated when it was realised that the Egyptian declaration was only meant to be a pressure tactic against Israel rather than anything else.

The Egyptian constitution also happens to state in its first Article that Egyptians form a part of the Arab Nation and strives to realise its comprehensive unity. As much as we all would wish it, it is not so certain, though, that the Egyptian authorities had this provision in mind when they declared their support for Syria.

More mundane reasons, such as political factors, must have been behind Cairo's surprising move, to pressure Israel.

As far-fetched as the Egyptian-Syrian unification may seem for the time being, it is not totally outside the realm of the possible to assume that the two countries might declare once again a unity of sorts along the lines of their first attempt at unification in the early sixties.

With Egypt armed with a peace treaty with the Jewish state and Syria still locked in a political and military hostile posture with it over the Golan Heights, all sorts of scenarios could be envisioned for a new Israeli-Egyptian-Syrian relationship.

What would, for instance, be the impact of the peace treaty on the Golan Heights as a territory that becomes part and parcel of an Egyptian-Syrian federation?

Closer to home, to what extent would Jordan remain aloof regarding events and circumstances surrounding Israeli-Syrian relations, or Israeli-Palestinian relations for that matter, when, by virtue of Article 1 of the Constitution, Jordanians are part of the Arab Nation? If we are organically intertwined with all the other Arab peoples, then it stands to reason that their future becomes our future and vice-versa.

These considerations need to be aired out in the open at one stage or another. There is no existing clearcut language in the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty that forecloses all options if a regional war breaks out.

Raising these issues, as theoretical as they may seem for the moment, would help us avoid finding ourselves at a crossroads that few of us may have envisioned.



## Israeli planes strike 3 times at Lebanon

RASHAYA, Lebanon (Agencies) — Israeli aircraft struck at suspected guerrilla targets in southeast Lebanon on Sunday, firing a dozen rockets into hills used as hideouts by guerrillas, security sources said.

Large columns of smoke rose from the remote, rocky hillsides after the planes struck three times in five minutes, but there were no immediate reports of casualties.

The raids followed a clash between Israeli troops and guerrillas on Friday in Israel's south Lebanon occupation zone in which two guerrillas were killed, according to sources with the pro-Israeli south Lebanon army militia.

Israel protested on Saturday that Katyusha rockets were fired from Lebanon into northern Israel on Friday. It complained to a five-nation monitoring group that the rockets violated an April ceasefire understanding.

An Israeli army general and a soldier were slightly injured in Sunday's attack.

Major General Eli Amari, head of the Israeli army liaison unit in south Lebanon, was part of a command convoy that was attacked late Saturday in the central area of the zone.

A bomb exploded in the convoy's path on a road in the central area of Israel's self-declared "security zone" and then the attackers fired automatic weapons and anti-tank rockets, security officials in the area said.

The general was injured in the foot and then quickly

evacuated and the soldier, who suffered slight injuries, was also taken to hospital, an army spokesman said.

The fighting left two Hizbollah guerrillas dead, officials said. A spokesman for Hizbollah's military wing, the Islamic Resistance, claimed responsibility for the attack on the convoy, which he said was carrying senior Israeli officers.

However, the spokesman could not confirm the deaths of the guerrillas. On Friday, rockets were fired from villages near the southern Lebanese port city of Tyre into northern Israel, in what was the first attack since a ceasefire between Israel and Hizbollah in April.

However, Hizbollah denied they had fired the rockets, which caused no damage or casualties.

The weekend military activity in South Lebanon — the last active Arab-Israeli battlefield — caused concern in Beirut on the eve of U.S.-sponsored donors conference in Washington at which Lebanon will seek up to \$5 billion in reconstruction aid.

Lebanese officials argue that their country deserves financial help and investment after making a huge effort to rebuild and to restore economic, political, social and security stability in the country in the past four years.

Beirut newspapers noted gloomily that the weekend fighting in the south did the country's image no good in the eyes of potential donors as the conference approached.

## Dulaimis claim attack on Uday Hussein

(Continued from page 1)

had claimed responsibility for the attack in statements distributed in Ramadi and Baghdad.

Bayan Jabr, a SCIRI delegate in Damascus, said he had information that "Uday is in a very critical condition."

Arrested in November 1994 for plotting against the government.

Mohammed Mazlum Dulaimi was executed despite a promise that Saddam Hussein gave to his family to pardon him. The return of his badly-mutilated body provoked bloody riots in May 1995 in Ramadi, the capital of the Anbar province west of Baghdad and stronghold of the Dulaimi clan.

Uday, 33, was shot and wounded while driving his car Thursday evening in the wealthy Al Mansour dis-

trict of Baghdad and admitted to Ben Sina Hospital in the capital.

In Beirut, Al Dawaa, a Shiite Muslim opposition party, claimed responsibility for the attack.

Uday was well enough Sunday to telephone his country's soccer team in Abu Dhabi to wish them luck during the Asian Cup. Iraq's Youth Television said.

"Uday (Hussein) congratulated the national team for its efforts and indicated he expected good results" at the tournament which has been taking place in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) since Dec. 4, it said. Iraq played the UAE on Sunday in the quarter-final and lost 1-0. Uday runs Youth Television and Babel newspaper and is chairman of the country's Olympic Committee and Football Federation.

## Security official explains refusal of entry

(Continued from page 1)

into enemies with bitter feelings," Dr. Sharif said.

The two-day workshop, organised by the Konrad Adenauer Foundation and Horizon Cultural Centre, aimed at training journalists from dailies, weeklies and Jordan Radio on how to write an investigative report.

The three editors were scheduled, along with chief editor of Egyptian newspaper Al Ahran, Salahuddin Hafez, who arrived on Thursday, to lecture the participants on various subjects and on their experi-

ences as editors of investigative reports.

Dr. Sharif claimed in his article that Mr. Khouri of Al Nahar was also denied entry at Queen Alia International Airport early Thursday.

But the security official denied it. "Only Mr. Salman was turned back," said the official.

"We had no problem with Rajeh (Khouri), who was reported to have been denied entry as well," said the official. "He, and the other Lebanese journalist (George Trad) chose on their own to go back in solidarity with Mr. Salman."

## Businessmen seek inclusion of Jordanian input in U.S.-Palestinian free-trade status

(Continued from page 12)

region." Therefore, it added "the legislation and subsequent proclamation recently signed by the president authorities the designation of qualifying industrial zones, defined as encompassing territories of Israel and Jordan or Israel and Egypt, products of which may receive duty-free entry into the U.S."

Jordan, Mr. Rock said, could still benefit from the treatment on the qualifying industrial zones.

Dr. Saket said that Jordan had not yet established such free zone area and it might take a while before it takes such a step.

Mr. Rock said that the Jordanian businessmen's remarks and demands will be taken into consideration by Washington.

## Bahrain has plans for developing disputed island

MANAMA (AP) — Bahrain's Housing Ministry has prepared plans for developing Hawar, the island disputed with neighboring Qatar, a newspaper reported Sunday.

The housing minister, Sheikh Khalid Ben Abdullah Al Khalifa, said plans for developing 5,000 hectares of Hawar include building residential areas, the Akhbar Al Khaleej newspaper said.

The island already has some permanent residents, as well as tourist facilities that attract Bahrainis and visitors. It also is believed to have military installations. Hawar is in the Gulf southeast of Bahrain, closer to

the Qatar mainland. Both Bahrain and Qatar claim the island as part of their territories.

The countries' dispute over Hawar, several other tiny islands and a strip of land in Qatar goes back to the 1950s. But it sharpened after Bahrain ended the disagreement in its decision to boycott a Gulf Cooperation Council summit hosted by Qatar earlier this month.

Two Qataris are on trial in Bahrain on spying charges. Bahrain says one of them, Salwa Fakhri, 33, befriended Bahrainis and asked them to take her to Hawar so that she could collect information about military facilities there.

## Palestinians welcome EU criticism of Israeli policy

GAZA CITY (AFP) — The Palestinian National Authority on Sunday hailed a European Union declaration which criticised Israeli settlements in the occupied territories.

"The conclusions of the Dublin (EU) summit ... which underlined the right of Palestinians to self-determination and criticised the Israeli settlement policy ... are positive and constructive," said Nabil Abu Rudeina, advisor to Palestinian President Yasser Arafat.

"The European position supports the peace process as well as the view of the Palestinian Authority and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) which are continuing their efforts to bring a total and just peace in the region," he told AFP.

The EU on Saturday expressed concern that building more Jewish settlements in Palestinian territories would erode confidence in the peace process.

"The settlements are contrary to international law and constitute a major obstacle to peace," the 15 EU heads of state and government said in a statement after a two-day summit in Dublin.

The Israeli government on Friday declared the West Bank settlements "national priority" zones which grants them tax breaks and subsidies, in retaliation for an attack that killed two Jewish settlers.

The Palestinian legislative council described the decision as "dangerous" and called for Palestinians to prepare for confrontation.

Some 140,000 settlers live in about 145 West Bank and Gaza Strip settlements.

## Jordan sent strong message to Israel

(Continued from page 12)

sides not to suffice themselves with mere statements but to take practical measures to bring pressure to bear upon the Israeli government to halt such policy.

Jordanian Israeli relations, he said, are going through a difficult stage.

"I do not need to say that the differences between the two sides over the Israeli settlement policy are big and clear to all. But we will spare no effort to convince the Israeli government that its settlement policies will have serious consequences. We are talking on basic principles adopted since the Madrid conference and we are stressing that any party that commits a violation of these rights is to be condemned -- whether it is Israel or any other party. We believe that these basic rights have not been respected by Israel with regard to the Hebron question or the other provisions concerning the transitional stage and also with regard to the

settlement policy because such violations make the peace process void and contravene the basic principle of exchanging land-for-peace."

Dr. Mutasher said Jordan's position had been deeply appreciated by wide sectors of the Israeli political organisations and the general public which appreciates the Jordanian mission of giving momentum to the peace process.

Referring to the case of detainees who will benefit from the special Royal pardon, the minister said there was no delay in this matter.

The specialised committee dealing with this issue has endorsed the principle of their release but there was need for more time to study each individual case separately, he said. He said the list of detainees to be freed as reported in the local press was inaccurate. Once the list is finalised it will be referred to the Council of Ministers for approval, he said.

## Gulf papers warn Annan over U.S. influence

DUBAI (R) — Gulf Arab newspapers on Sunday urged Ghannem Kofi Annan, elected as the new U.N. Secretary-general, to ensure the organisation did not turn into an instrument of the U.S. government.

Saudi Arabia's Al Riyadh daily said U.S. threats to withhold its financial commitments to the United Nations rendered the "selection and departure of the organisation's secretary-general an American decision."

"The issue at the international organisation is not in the departure of people and selection of replacements but in its basic rules and the American hegemony over it," the paper said.

Khaleej Times of the United Arab Emirates said Mr. Annan "will have to prove to the other members of the Security Council that he is not an American pup-

pet."

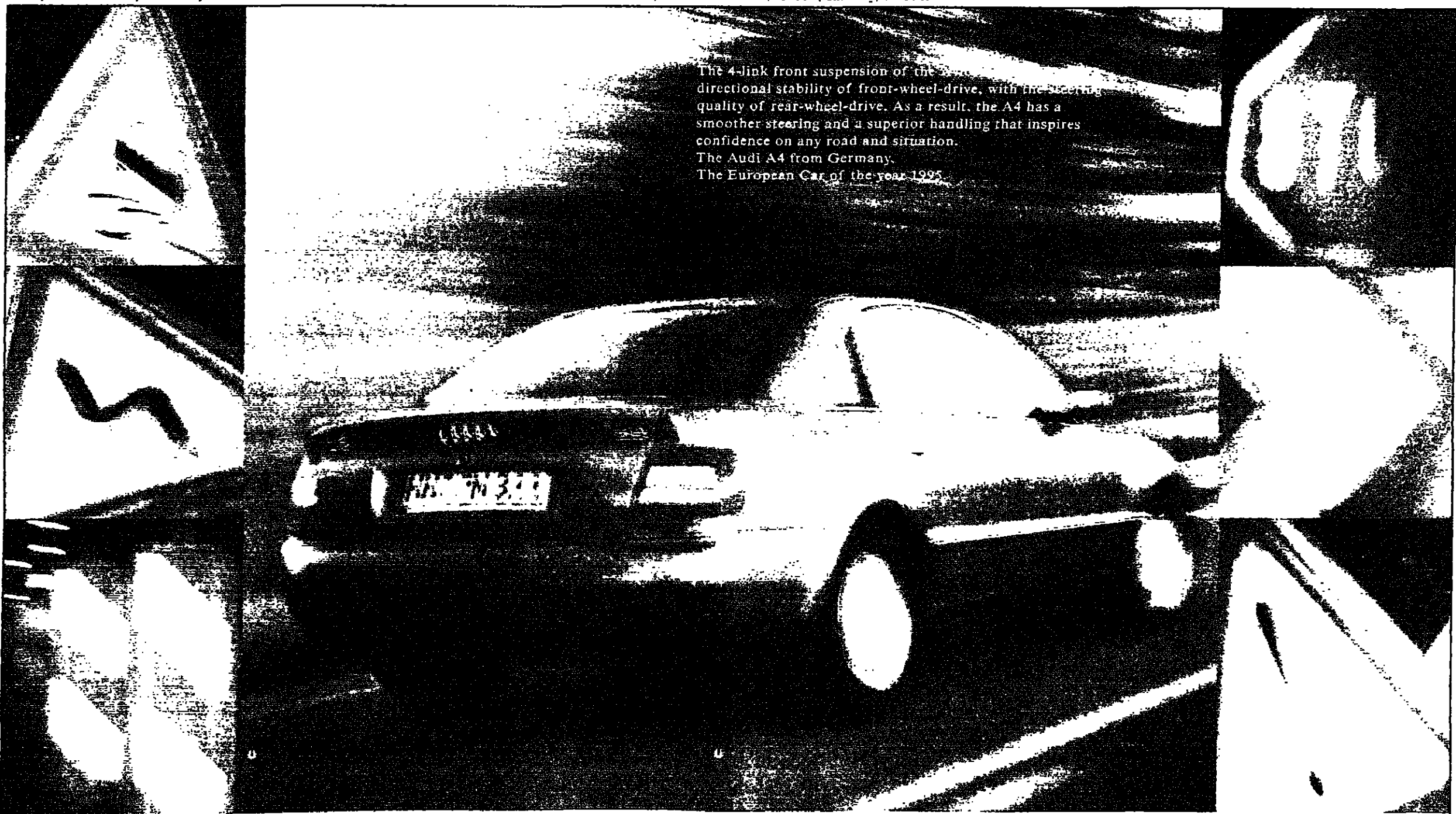
"Being an old U.N. hand and an insider, he will have to guard against Washington's plan to make him something of a chief administrative officer," it added.

Mr. Annan, 58, who heads U.N. peacekeeping operations, won the unanimous support of the 15-member Security Council on Friday after France dropped its previous veto threat.

Mr. Annan will take over on Jan. 1 from Egypt's Boutros Ghali who sought a second term but was vetoed by the United States.

"Annan was under-secretary general for peacekeeping during the U.N.'s most recent foul-ups in Somalia and Bosnia, so the question has to be asked if Annan has learnt from mistakes made," said the UAE's English-language daily Gulf News.

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## Labour growth in Arab region the highest in the world — study

CAIRO (AFP) — The number of people of working age in Arab countries is increasing faster than anywhere else in the world but unemployment remains high and steps must be taken to improve education to boost the region's competitiveness, according to a study.

By 2030, around 332 million people in the Arab World — or 75 per cent of the population — will be of working age, compared with 158 million in 1995, according to the study by Ismail Sirageldin of the Kuwait Institute for Scientific Research.

That figure, which includes people aged between 15 and 64, will shoot up to 580 million by the end of the next century, Mr. Sirageldin said in a paper presented to an Arab regional conference on populations in Cairo.

Mr. Sirageldin, a profes-

sor emeritus from John Hopkins University in the United States, based his report on World Bank figures which projected the annual growth rate of the region's working-age population at more than three per cent.

The rate compares with forecast growth of 2.5 per cent for sub-Saharan Africa and Latin America and less than one per cent for the 29 industrialised countries of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development.

But Mr. Sirageldin said that in 1995, the Arab region had one of the highest rates of unemployment at more than 15 per cent and only attracted 2.3 per cent of total world investment in developing countries, down from 4.5 per cent in 1992.

"The built-in momentum of the Arab populations makes the rate of growth of

labour in the Arab states the highest — a fact that will persist for more than a generation," he said.

"But a close examination of education quality, illustrates that it is far from being internationally competitive," he added.

Mr. Sirageldin deplored the lack of a long-term policy in the Arab World, which he attributed to factors such as the Arab-Israeli conflict and the culture clash between the Western world and Islam.

"This set serious constraints on the adaptive capacity of the Arab countries to cope with the requirements of an open global system," he said.

"It also created among Arab populations a growing distrust of Western intentions and suspicion about the ultimate goal of the globalisation process — being viewed as a Western plot for dominance," he

added.

The total Arab population is forecast to climb to 514 million in 2030 from 253.6 million in 1995.

"With the assumed decline of fertility and increased education the rate of growth of the labour force will be even higher as female labour force participation is bound to increase," the study said.

Mr. Sirageldin noted that while primary and secondary school enrollment rose during the 1970s and 1980s, progress since then has not been even, with dropout rates from secondary school at around 25 per cent.

According to UNESCO figures, only 11 per cent of people in the Arab World aged between 18 and 23 were enrolled in universities, compared with 76 per cent for the United States.

## Mediterranean countries need \$250b for energy

TUNIS (R) — The 10 southern and eastern Mediterranean countries (SEMC) need to invest a total of \$250 billion in their energy industries between now and 2006, according to a survey carried out by the France-based Observatoire Méditerranéen de l'Energie (OME).

"The total financing seems enormous, representing around 65 per cent of today's combined gross domestic product (GDP) for the SEMC," OME Manager Manfred Hafner said at a seminar on investing in the gas industry.

The SEMC includes Algeria, Libya, Syria, Egypt, Israel, Morocco, Tunisia, Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan.

"These huge investment requirements for energy developments in the SEMC during the next 15 years...must be considered in the overall context of

rapidly increasing population, and of economic development that demands massive financial investment in all sectors of society," the survey of governments and energy companies said.

Turkey alone requires about 28 per cent of the financing requirements, or \$70 billion.

Algeria would need \$51 billion, representing 20 per cent of the total, and Libya \$35 billion. Syria, Egypt and Israel would need \$20 billion each.

Financing requirements for Morocco were put at \$16 billion and for Tunisia at \$13 billion. Lebanon would have to invest \$3.1 billion and Jordan \$1.2 billion.

The breakdown by sector showed that investment in power industry would be \$145 billion, representing 57 per cent of the total. Two-thirds of this amount would be allocated to Turkey alone.

Investment in the oil and gas industry was estimated at \$106 billion, representing 42 per cent of the total. Investment in the gas sector alone was estimated at \$64 billion. The remaining would be in the coal industry and renewable energy sector.

The survey said that 57 per cent of the total requirements would come from external sources.

Between 1996 and 2010 natural gas consumption in the SEMC is expected to increase at an average rate of 8.5 per cent a year to 125 MTOE (million tonnes oil equivalent) from 40 MTOE.

The report said the energy landscape in the 10 countries was changing under the influence of increasing demand, increasing interest in gas and the potential gas supplies from newly discovered reserves in North Africa.

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR MONDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1996

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll, Richter Foundation

**ARIES:** (March 21 to April 19) You could feel moody today and you might do something you will later regret, so cheer up. Later this evening will be a good time to meet with fellow associates and determine the best course of action for your career.

**TAURUS:** (April 20 to May 20) Make sure you are accurate with figures today and avoid making some expensive error, which could make your reputation tarnished. Later this evening will be good for consulting with a knowledgeable person.

**GEMINI:** (May 21 to June 21) Begin the week properly by keeping promises you have made today to outside allies. Be most careful in motion while on the highway and thereby avoid any difficulties which could be detrimental.

**MOON CHILDREN:** (June 22 to July 21) Complete any career activities left undone before you tackle anything else ahead of you. Be efficient in your business dealings and thereby you will gain the respect and admiration of a bigwig who can be quite influential.

**LEO:** (July 22 to August 21) You want to rush into something new today, however, it is wiser to complete whatever you have started first and thereby make your career activities more successful in the days ahead. This evening will be good to be romantic.

**VIRGO:** (August 22 to September 22) Get into the business world today and handle routines wisely so that you will be noticed by those in authority and become successful. Try to be patient with your loved ones at home tonight thereby there won't be any difficulties.

**LIBRA:** (September 23 to October 22) Use more tact in dealing with outsiders today and thereby avoid difficulties which could occur. Study bills and correspondence carefully, so that there won't be any errors. Later you can go out on the town with your mate.

**SCORPIO:** (October 23 to November 21) This is a good day today to complete some property affair which awaits your attention. Don't delay any longer thereby avoiding any potential difficulties. Later this evening you can meet with a bigwig and make plans for the days ahead.

**SAGITTARIUS:** (November 22 to December 21) Be more poised when and if today you see any friends and new acquaintances so that you present a friendly front. Show more affection at home towards your mate this evening and he or she will respond favourably.

**CAPRICORN:** (December 22 to January 20) If you apply yourself seriously, today you can rid yourself of a long-time annoyance which has been plaguing you for some time. Later this evening would be a good time to discuss with knowledgeable people your plan of operation.

**AQUARIUS:** (January 21 to February 19) Keep busy at whatever will gain you greater assets today and make your loved ones more comfortable. Later this evening you will be able to go out on the town with close friends and loved ones for a fun time together.

**PISCES:** (February 20 to March 20) Take time today to improve your appearance and thereby make yourself noticed by those in authority so that you can become quite successful. Some health difficulty should be taken care of quickly before it becomes more serious.

Birthstone of December: Turquoise — Zircon.

## Oil prices seen holding as Iraq starts supplies

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Oil prices are expected to remain firm in the coming weeks although Iraq started Sunday loading its first crude export shipments in six years under a permission from the United Nations.

While there was no immediate market reaction to the shipments because of Sunday's holiday, prices will not likely lose strength which they have maintained this year due to strong demand and Baghdad's absence.

"If prices will be affected, they could have been affected last week when Iraq announced it was resuming exports," an Abu Dhabi-based oil analyst said.

"They could drop slightly in the next few days but I don't see a sharp decline. There has been a sort of a consensus that the market will absorb the Iraqi crude quantities because demand in winter is at its highest level."

Iraq could export between 500,000 and 600,000 barrels

per day (bpd) at current prices under an oil-for-food deal struck with the United Nations in May.

With the actual production of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries standing at around 26 million bpd currently, the Iraqi crude supplies could be assimilated as world demand for the 11-nation group will exceed that level in the first quarter, according to experts.

But the experts noted that OPEC, which is producing nearly one million bpd above its official ceiling, needs to cut surplus output in the second quarter, when consumption retreats to about 25 million bpd before it hits lowest annual level of below the 25-million mark in the third quarter.

The oil ministers of the Organisation of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries, holding their annual talks in Cairo on Saturday, ruled out any impact of the return of embargo-hit Iraq to the market.

"There is a consensus

among the group that the international market can absorb Iraqi crude because of the increasing demand for crude," Qatari Oil Minister Abdullah Ben Hamad Al Ateyya, told reporters.

Iraq, the second biggest oil power in the world after Saudi Arabia, said Sunday it had begun to load crude at its Gulf terminal under a contract with two U.S. firms but the shipments destination was not immediately disclosed.

Iraqi Oil Minister Amr Rashid said 500,000 barrels of crude oil were already loaded onto the Star of Africa supertanker at Mina Al Bakr terminal under "a contract signed with two U.S. companies."

Iraq's absence has combined with a steep decline in Western crude stockpiles this year to keep oil prices above \$20.

Over the past few weeks, prices surged beyond OPEC's long-sought price level of \$21 and they are expected to average \$20 by the end of the year, their

highest average since the end of the oil boom 13 years ago.

Experts said prices would also remain firm because Saudi Arabia and other heavyweight producers in the region were respecting their OPEC-assigned quotas. They noted most of OPEC's excess supplies came from Venezuela and Nigeria.

Saudi Arabia has been reluctant to hike output to benefit from the price improvement apparently fearing a reversal in the price increase. Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) are also sticking to their OPEC shares.

The three countries produce around 12.2 million bpd under the group's share-out agreement but their actual capacity is far higher, running at more than 15 million bpd, according to Gulf oil experts.

"The compliance by Gulf states with their assigned quotas is another significant factor that prevents any pressures on oil prices. Those three countries have shown seriousness in respecting their quotas over the past year and there is no indication they will change such a policy," one source said.

### REUTERS

### REUTERS

#### The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	JPY	CAD	YEN	CHF	ITL	FRF
US Dollar	1.5518	0.6037	1.3238	113.90	1.3625	1627.87	1.7404	5.2450	
DE Mark	0.6444		0.3887	0.8530	73.40	0.8777	984.26	1.1215	3.3798
GB Sterling	1.6564	2.5738		2.1868	108.55	2.2568	2530.76	2.8828	8.8878
CH Franc	0.7555	117.15	0.4555	86.03	1.0235	1153.46	131.07	3.9937	
JP Yen	0.0088	1.3612	0.5293	1.1611		1.1952	13.40	152.67	4.6009
CA Dollar	0.7339	1.1416	0.4430	0.9718	1.20		1123.89	1.2807	3.8459
IT Lira	0.0097	1.0150	0.3946	0.0866	1343.00	0.8912		11.38	3.4306
NL Guilder	0.5748	89.13	0.3495	76.05	65.41	0.7828	377.53		3.0125
FR Franc	0.1907	0.2958	0.1150	25.2258	21.70	0.2597	33.17	33.1700	

Energy		
Oil	Last	Previous
Brent	23.95	23.40
WTI	24.40	23.70
Bony	23.95	23.40
Dubai	20.35	20.25
UCL Gas	206.00	205.00

Mid-East Currencies					
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2865	0.4139	0.16097	0.55319	30.397
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.42287	0.16438	0.59607	31.0405
KW Dinar	3.3350	5.17998	2.01329	4.41696	380.228
BH Dinar	0.3770	4.11692	1.60128	3.5147	392.389
CY Pound	2.1262	3.2994	1.2829	2.8142	242.174

Metal Prices		
Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz)	368.55	369.05
Silver (oz)	4.82	4.84
CU (3 Months)	2150	2155
Zinc (3 Months)	1057	1059
Lead (3 Months)	700	702
Ni (3 Months)	6700	6710

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)					
Period	1	3	6	9	12
Currency	Months	Months	Months	Months	Year
USD	5.50	5.43	5.46	5.56	5.62
DEM	3.18	3.13	3.13	3.11	3.15
FRF	3.30	3.35	3.36	3.37	3.40
CHF	1.94	1.87	1.87	1.81	1.87
ITL	7.43	7.09	6.77	6.58	6.48

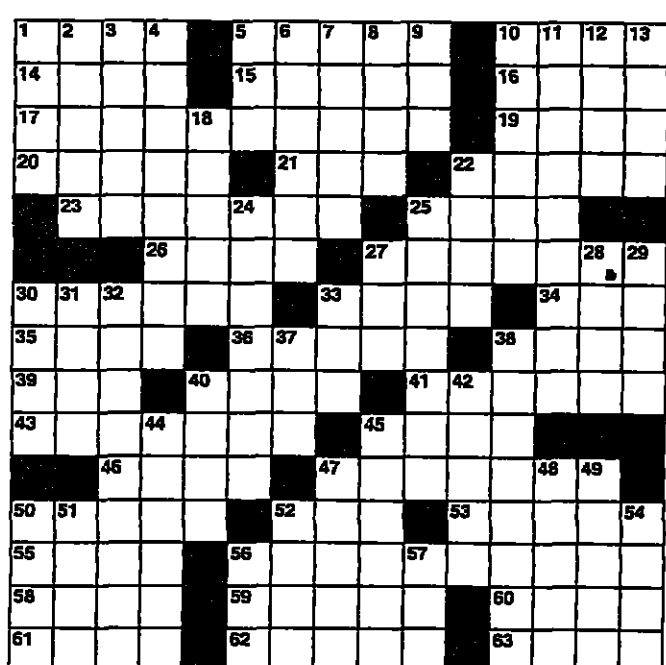
Energy		
Commodity	Last	Delivery
Coffee (c/lbs)	114.75	Spot
Cocoa (c/lbs)	1370	Spot
Sugar (c/lbs)	304.7	Spot
Wheat (c/lbs)	129	Spot
Soy (c/lbs)	21.75	Spot
Tea (c/lbs)	125	Spot
Barley (c/lbs)	2.16	Spot
Rice (c/lbs)	470	Spot

JOD Cross Rates		
Currency	Buy	Sell
US Dollar	0.708	0.710
GB Sterling	1.1719	1.1778
DE Mark	0.4556	0.4579
CH Franc	0.4341	0.4368
FR Franc	0.1348	0.1355
JP Yen	0.6207	0.6238
NL Guilder	0.4064	0.4084
IT Lira	0.4628	0.4651

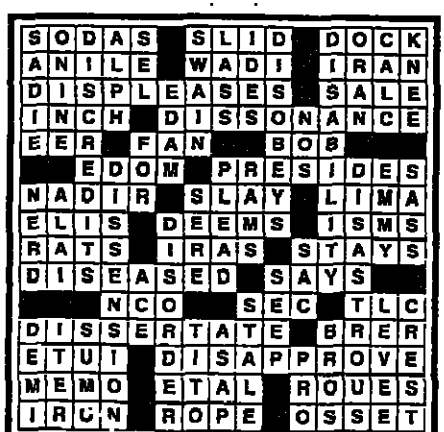
Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

### THE Daily Crossword

- ACROSS
- Hamlet
  - "Blame in Love" star
  - Word in a comparison
  - European river
  - Make amends for
  - Sharpen
  - Used
  - Boring routines
  - Theater part
  - They sang "Evil Woman"
  - Author Pasternak
  - Stretches out
  - Chinese dynasty
  - Time periods
  - Alpine singer
  - Covered with lawn
  - Decimal system units
  - Ginger
  - Parts of tires
  - At the very —
  - Minor
  - Yamaguchi's milieu
  - Freeway access
  - Mishandled
  - Conversations
  - Tight-fitting
  - Pandora's find
  - Ordinance
  - The real —
  - "Norma —"
  - Former Russian rulers
  - "Now — me down to sleep..."
  - Closure
  - Endowment
  - In re
  - Destroy
  - Actor Parker
  - By — and bounds
  - Worry
  - DOWN
  - Makeshift bed, in England
  - Waiting for
  - Lefty playwright
  - Synopsis



by Norma Steinberg



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- Breakthrough
- Down in the dumps
- Kennedy and Waters
- Touchdowns
- Part of A.D.
- Stayed in front
- Regal chair
- Sand-filled timepiece
- Against
- Scottish loch
- Comes close to
- Propositions
- Lies in wait for
- Helena's state
- Okay
- Nobelist Wiesel
- Enjoy a book
- Small suitcase
- Costa —
- Yankees
- Spigot
- German river
- First emperor of Rome
- Depend
- Sleep hill
- of London
- Increase
- Pacific island group
- Besmirch
- Eat away at
- Annoy
- Detective's find
- Caftan
- Good news for skiers
- Coolidge's nickname
- Army officers: abbr.

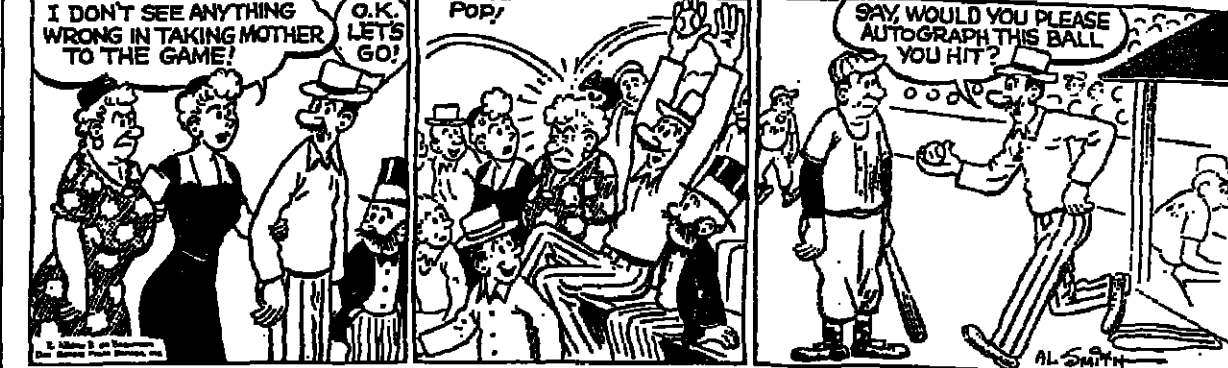
### Peanuts



### Andy Capp



### Mutt'n Jeff



Birthstone of December: Turquoise — Zircon.







## UAE beat Iraq with dramatic 'golden goal'

ABU DHABI (AFP) — A "golden goal" 14 minutes into overtime saw United Arab Emirates (UAE) snatch a dramatic Asian Cup quarter final 1-0 victory over Iraq here on Sunday.

It was a blistering 35-metre free kick from Abdul Hussain that streaked past Iraqi goalkeeper Emad Hassan that gave the tournament its first ever "golden goal" and brought Iraq's cup run to an end.

But the UAE had a chance to seal the match in regulation time when they were awarded a 59th minute penalty when Hassan Ahmed was brought down in the area by Abdul Jabbar Hanoun.

Bakht Saad struck his spot kick to the left but Iraqi keeper Emad Hassan was able to save it.

Both sides started off clearly more interested in not losing rather than winning with scoring chances far and few. The Iraqis were pushing up in midfield as the UAE were reduced to pumping up long balls to Abdul Ahmed but although he was outjumping the Iraqi defence there was no one to help him.

It was Iraq, making their comeback in the Asian Cup since their enforced isolation following the Gulf war, who had the best two opportunities to score in a nervous and tense opening 45 minutes.

Striker Laith Hussein Shihab took the ball just outside the UAE area and volleyed in a shot that had UAE keeper Muhsin Fairouz well beaten but the 27-year-old Shihab could only hold his head in despair as the ball shaved the cross-bar.

Five minutes later a blunder by Fairouz almost let Iraq go in front. The UAE keeper failed to hold a low rasping shot from Khalid Sabbar, letting the ball bounce off his knee.

Striker Husam Naji quickly took the loose ball towards the goal-line before firing in a low centre but there was no one on the receiving end.

UAE coach Thomislav Ivic was screaming at his players from the touch-line, clearly furious over their lacklustre performance.

He had even more to worry about in a torrid five-minute spell shortly after the restart when the Iraqi attack were uncovering gaping holes in the UAE defence.

Defender Hassan Mubarak handled the ball off the line but Egyptian referee claimed that Fairouz had been fouled by an Iraqi forward and instead of giving a penalty he gave the home side a free kick.

A minute later Naji hit wide when it looked easier to score and second later Khalid Sabbar, all alone inside the box, failed to control the ball and squandered a golden chance.

The UAE, being urged on by 55,000 fans, were clinging on for dear life. The Iraqi defence, directed by a cool headed Rahdi Swadi, were containing an UAE attack now minus Ahmed who had gone off earlier with an injured ankle.

But as time began running out and the likelihood of a goal coming it was clearly going to be a case of who was the fitter.



Japanese striker Kazuyoshi Miura (left) fights for the ball with Kuwait's Yousif Al Dakhi (right) during their quarter final match in the Asia Cup in Al Ain (Reuters photo)

## Kuwait beat holders Japan

AL AIN, United Arab Emirates (R) — Kuwait beat defending champions Japan 2-0 (1-0 halftime) in an Asian Cup quarter-final tie on Sunday.

An inspired Kuwait, who recorded the tournament's first major upset by beating South Korea 2-0 in the previous round, began the match brightly.

They had the first chance in the fourth minute when a long-range drive from Houwaidi was parried away by keeper Kenichi Shimokawa, although his opposite number Falah Al

Majidi soon had to react quickly to deny Japan's striker Kazuyoshi Miura.

The Kuwaitis broke the deadlock in the 17th minute. Abdullah Sehan pounced on a poor back header by Japanese defender Naoki Soma, before cutting it back from the byline to Houwaidi who fired home from close range.

Japan had a lucky escape in the 53rd minute when the referee produced only the yellow card to Hiroshige Yanagimoto following a professional foul

on Abdul Aziz.

But the protests instantly turned to celebrations when Houwaidi chased a harmless-looking ball, the goalkeeper made a mess of it and the striker sneaked between two defenders to score.

It was his fifth goal in the Asian Cup, making him the top scorer.

The Japanese then laid siege to the Kuwaiti penalty area but some athletic goalkeeping and brilliant defending kept them at bay.

## Del Piero saves leaders Juventus from defeat

### ITALIAN SOCCER

MILAN (AFP) — Alessandro Del Piero saved Italian league leaders Juventus from certain defeat on Sunday, scoring twice as the world champions came from 2-0 down to beat Verona 3-2.

Champions AC Milan continued their renaissance in the Serie A under Arrigo Sacchi by beating Reggiana 3-0, while Roy Hodgson's Inter Milan lost 4-3 to Sampdoria after throwing away a 3-1 lead.

Juventus may be the world's best football team and top of the Serie A but they were humbled by Filippo Maniero's 25th minute strike and on the ropes after his second in the 44th minute.

Juventus showed their fighting spirit by snatching one back through defender Sergio Porrini in the third minute of first-half injury time, but they had a let-off when Maniero hit the bar on the hour.

However, when Christian Vieri was fouled in the penalty area it was left to Del Piero, who had converted two spot-kicks in the midweek victory over Udinese, to strike home the equaliser.

Del Piero, whose goal in Tokyo last month won the Intercontinental Cup for Juventus, followed up with the winner in the 72nd minute.

AC Milan may be about to lose Roberto Baggio

after a dust-up with coach Sacchi, but they were celebrating a hat-trick from Demetrio Albertini on Sunday as they trounced bottom club Reggiana 3-0. Albertini opened the scoring in the third minute and followed up with two penalties in the 69th and 75th minutes.

Inter Milan crashed to only their second defeat of the season as Giovanni Montella scored a hat-trick for Sampdoria at San Siro.

Montella's header gave Sampdoria a seventh minute lead, but Marco Brancu equalised five minutes later and Nicola Berti made it 2-1 to Inter just before the break. Brancu notched his second soon after the re-start but two more from Montella brought Sampdoria level.

Striker Roberto Mancini, who recently had a move to Inter turned down by Sampdoria President Enrico Mantovani, got the winner in the 89th minute.

In a see-saw match at Cagliari, Russian striker Igor Kolyvanov scored for Bologna from a 12th minute free-kick — only to find his team 2-1 down within 10 minutes.

Roberto Muzzi equalised in the 19th and Giuseppe Pancaro converted an 21st minute penalty, but

Bologna's Carlo Nervo levelled in the 33rd.

Udinese may be without injured German goal ace Oliver Bierhoff, but their 22-year-old Brazilian Amoroso Dos Santos was on target twice in the first half hour as they beat Fiorentina 2-0.

Another man to score a brace was Atalanta's Filippo Inzaghi, who became the Serie A's top scorer with 10 goals as they crushed Piacenza 4-0. Domenico Morfeo got the third and Marco Sgro the fourth.

Lazio beat Perugia 2-1 after a late flurry. Roberto Rambaudi broke the deadlock in the 71st minute, Caruine Gautieri levelled for Perugia in the 78th but two minutes later skipper Giuseppe Signori converted a penalty.

Brazilian defender Aldair scored a late winner for AS Roma against Napoli, while the match between Vicenza and Parma was an evening kick-off.

Vicenza are currently second in the table, one point ahead of a rejuvenated AC Milan. However Vicenza had to beat Parma later on Sunday if they were to eat into Juventus' provisional six-point lead at the top after the afternoon matches.

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**ANNOUNCEMENT**  
**The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan Telecommunications Regulatory Commission**  
The Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (TRC) of Jordan announces that it has released a Call for Tenders for two national public payphone licences. Following consultation with the industry, the TRC issued the Call for Tenders dated December 14, 1996 (TRC Call 1996-2), which sets out the process that the TRC will follow in awarding the new licences. The process consists of two phases. During the first phase, a special tender evaluation committee will review the technical aspects of the submissions from all applicants. Those applicants who successfully pass this phase will participate in the second phase, in which their sealed financial proposals will be opened at a meeting of all qualifying applicants. Parties interested in applying for the payphone licences may obtain a copy of the Call for Tenders from the TRC upon payment of JD1,500 before January 14, 1997. The deadline for the submission of applications is March 16, 1997.  
For a copy of TRC Call 1996-2, or for further information, contact:  
The Office of the Director General  
Telecommunications Regulatory Commission  
P.O. Box 850967, Amman 11185, Jordan  
Telephone (962) 6-862024 - Fax (962) 6-863641

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Both vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH	EAST
♠ K 8 7 4	♠ 5
♥ K 5 4	♥ J 10 8 3
♦ 8 6 3	♦ K Q 9 7 4 2
♣ A K 2	♣ 8 4

WEST: ♠ Q 10 9, ♥ 9 8 2, ♦ J 10 6, ♣ Q 10 7 5  
SOUTH: ♠ A J 5 3 2, ♥ A Q 7, ♦ A, ♣ J 9 8 3

The bidding:  
NORTH: 1♠, 2♠, 3♠, 4♠, 5♠, 6♠, 7♠  
EAST: 1♥, 2♥, 3♥, 4♥, 5♥, 6♥, 7♥  
SOUTH: 1♣, 2♣, 3♣, 4♣, 5♣, 6♣, 7♣  
NORTH: 1♠, 2♠, 3♠, 4♠, 5♠, 6♠, 7♠  
EAST: 1♥, 2♥, 3♥, 4♥, 5♥, 6♥, 7♥  
SOUTH: 1♣, 2♣, 3♣, 4♣, 5♣, 6♣, 7♣

Opening lead: Jack of ♠  
You don't need to be a mathematical genius to play bridge. But some knowledge of the probabilities is necessary to enable you to choose the better of two lines. Quite often, common sense is all that is needed. North-South did well to get no further than a small slam after the interference by East. South's bid of five ♠ trump not only asked for kings, but confirmed possession of

A diamond was ruffed in the closed hand and three rounds of hearts were cashed, ending on the ace. Declarer now ruffed diamond a slam to complete the strategy. One high club was cashed, then West was put on lead with the queen of trumps. On the forced club play, declarer played low in dummy and, when East followed low, the jack won and the slam was home.

**JORDAN TIMES**  
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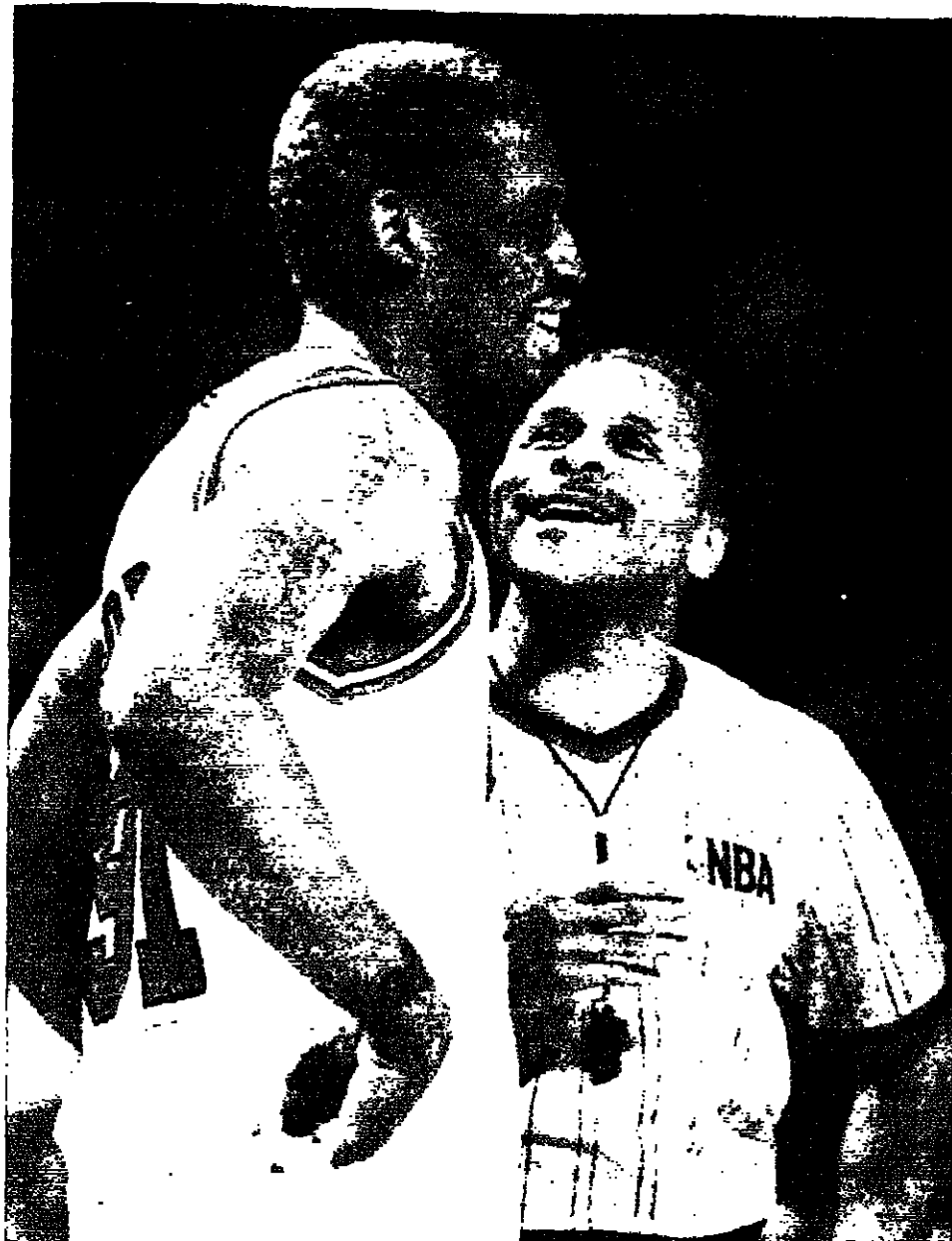
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<p><b>TODAY AT</b></p> <p><b>CINEMA TEL: 634144</b></p> <p><b>PHILADELPHIA</b> PHILADELPHIA 1 Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 Macaulay Culkin... in <b>GETTING EVEN WITH DAD</b> PHILADELPHIA 2 TWISTER Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30</p>	<p><b>CINEMA TEL: 669238</b></p> <p><b>PLAZA</b> <b>SEAN CONNERY...in</b> <b>THE ROCK</b> (IN DOLBY STEREO) Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30</p>	<p><b>CINEMA TEL: 677420</b></p> <p><b>CONCORD</b> <b>CONCORD "1"</b> <b>INDEPENDENCE DAY</b> (IN DOLBY STEREO) Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:45 <b>CONCORD "2"</b> Robert Redford &amp; Michelle Pfeiffer ... in <b>UP CLOSE &amp; PERSONAL</b> Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30</p>	<p><b>Ammon Theatre &amp; Cinema TEL: 618274 - 618275</b></p> <p>Today presents Zawad Weld Awad theatre group in the play entitled <b>Five-Star Government</b> Starring comedians: <b>Mahmoud Saimah &amp; Hussein Tubeishat</b> play starts 8:30 p.m</p>	<p><b>Nabil &amp; Hisham's Theatre TEL: 625155</b></p> <p><b>PRESENTS</b> <b>THE SATIRICAL COMEDY</b> <b>Arab Human Rights</b> at 8:30 p.m. Theatre is closed Friday, Saturday &amp; Sunday For reservation please call 625155 - 640155</p>
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# Sports

## Off-the-court activities are detracting Rodman from his primary job, Michael Jordan says



Dennis Rodman joking with an NBA referee (AFP photo)

CHICAGO (AP) — Michael Jordan says Dennis Rodman's off-the-court activities are detracting from what should be his primary job — helping the Chicago Bulls repeat as U.S. National Basketball Association (NBA) champions.

"He's taken on a lot," Jordan said. "Maybe it's too much for him, too time consuming."

Rodman has a new cable television show, a movie coming out in April and a commitment to write two books in 1997. In addition, the flamboyant forward has become a sought-after product pitchman.

"Dennis always says he's in control and can dictate whatever he wants to do," Jordan said Wednesday. "If that means telling some of these corporations to back off a little and let him get his basketball skills where he wants them, he should do it."

"He can't be successful off the court unless he's successful on the court. That's one golden rule."

Jordan said Rodman's business dealings probably created his obvious apathy toward basketball. And, he added, that likely led to Rodman's profane diatribe against the NBA and its referees, resulting in a suspension for two games by the Bulls.

Rodman served the first half of his suspension Wednesday night, when the Bulls ended a rare two-game losing streak by defeating Minnesota. The suspension is costing Rodman \$104,878 in salary.

Rodman's agent, Dwight Manley, said Jordan has far more going on away from basketball than his client does.

"Michael has blazed a

new path for the athlete as the endorser," Manley said. "He has so many irons in the fire, even he probably can't keep track."

Jordan, whose estimated \$80 million in outside earnings over the last two years led all athletes, admitted that he must push himself to be motivated on the court.

But Jordan, who is aiming for his ninth NBA scoring title and is considered the best player in the world, said he has things in perspective.

"I've got a lot going on, more than I've ever had to deal with. I can understand some of the things Dennis is going through," Jordan said. "But this is the first time he's had to deal with it. I've been doing it my whole career. I know what my priorities are — family first, basketball second and that other stuff third."

Jordan, who last week criticized Rodman for getting outplayed by inferior power forwards, believes that winning remains important to his teammate.

"If he doesn't care, I don't think he would have extended himself as he did last year to try to fit in and do his job," he said. "We still have the faith that he is a winner."

Asked if he would try to keep Rodman in check, Jordan said: "It's not my responsibility. I'm not going to monitor him. And you don't want to push the relationship to the point where you feel you have to give him advice. He's independent. I feel very reluctant to step into his world or crowd him. I want him to make his own choices."

## Spain, Netherlands win key games; Portugal, Germany in 0-0 draw

LONDON (AP) — Spain and the Netherlands won key World Cup qualifying matches and Germany and Portugal played a goalless draw in Saturday's three crucial European World Cup qualifiers.

The Netherlands defeated age-old rival Belgium 3-0 to move atop qualifying Group Seven.

Goals from Dennis Bergkamp (25th) — his 29th career goal for the Dutch — Clarence Seedorf (29th) and a penalty from Wim Jonk (50th) gave the Netherlands its third win in a row. The Dutch now lead their European group with a maximum of nine points out of three games.

Spain won in Valencia over previously unbeaten Yugoslavia on goals from Josep Guardiola on a penalty (19th) and Raul Gonzalez (37th). The victory left

### WORLD CUP ROUNDUP

Spain with 10 points in four games in Group Six, just behind Yugoslavia with 12 points in five games.

Portugal's draw with Germany in group nine left the European champions with five points in three games. Portugal leads the group with eight points in five games. Ukraine has six in three games.

After its 11-1 thrashing of Liechtenstein last month, Macedonia was humbled by Romania.

Barcelona star Gheorghe Popescu scored all the goals at Skopje as the Romanians romped to the top of the Group Eight standings. Romania has a maximum nine points from three games and Macedonia drops to second with seven from five.

Bulgaria's victory at Cyprus moved it past Israel and into second place in Group Five.

Two goals by Krassimir Balakov, who plays in Germany for VfB Stuttgart, and another by Benica's Ilian Iliev, overpowered the Cypriots, who remained fourth of the five teams with three points.

Russia leads the standings with seven points and Bulgaria has six. Israel, four points from three games, was scheduled to host last place Luxembourg late Sunday.

Northern Ireland followed up its heroic 1-1 draw at European champi-

on Germany by downing Albania in another Group Nine game.

Iain Dowie netted the two first-half goals to keep the Northern Irish in contention with five points — the same as Germany. Germany has a game in hand.

Wales, crushed 7-1 by the Netherlands in its previous Group Seven game, at least didn't concede any against Turkey at Cardiff.

Manchester United star Ryan Giggs was back from an injury to pose problems to the Turks, but Kemal-ettin Senturk hit the Welsh crossbar and veteran Wales goalkeeper Neville Southall, in his 90th appearance in national colours, made some brilliant saves.

The point gained Wales second place in the group with seven. The Netherlands leads with nine. The Dutch have two games in hand.

In the CONCACAF region, Brian McBride and Genoa striker Roy Lassiter combined to fill in for the suspended Eric Wynalda and both scored, leading the Americans into the hexagonal final round of qualifying.

Ronald Gomez pulled the Costa Ricans within a goal in the 75th, but a partisan crowd of 40,527 in Stanford, California, enabled the United States to withstand the Latin Americans' late rallies.

## Over 70 fans detained ahead of World Cup qualifier

BRUSSELS, Belgium (AP) — Belgian police detained over 70 people Saturday for fighting and drunkenness before the start of a World Cup qualifier between Belgium and the Netherlands, officials said.

In the worst incident, 30 Dutchmen attacked local youths close to King Baudouin Stadium.

Police moved in quickly to make several arrests and

no serious injuries were reported, police spokesman Michael Jonniaux said.

One hour before the start of the 8 p.m. game, police had detained 58 Dutchmen and 13 Belgians. Almost all people who had been detained will be released after the match, with only a half dozen facing arrests for possession of weapons such as knives, he said.

"But so far everything is

still under control," he said.

The rivalry between the two neighbouring countries is mostly a friendly one with no political bad blood dividing the fans. In the past, incidents of hooliganism at Belgium-Netherlands games have been rare.

Over 40,000 fans were expected to fill the sold-out stadium with many more to watch game in local saloons.

### NBA standings

#### EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division				
	W	L	Pct	Gh
Miami	18	5	.783	-
New York	15	6	.714	2
Orlando	9	10	.474	7
Washington	9	11	.450	7 1/2
Philadelphia	7	15	.318	10 1/2
New Jersey	5	13	.278	10 1/2
Boston	5	15	.250	11 1/2

#### WESTERN CONFERENCE

Midwest Division				
	W	L	Pct	Gh
Houston	20	2	.909	-
Utah	18	3	.857	1 1/2
Dallas	8	13	.381	11 1/2
Minnesota	8	15	.348	12 1/2
Denver	5	19	.208	16
San Antonio	4	17	.190	15 1/2
Vancouver	4	19	.174	16 1/2

Central Division				
	W	L	Pct	Gh
Chicago	20	3	.870	-
Detroit	16	4	.800	2 1/2
Cleveland	14	8	.636	5 1/2
Atlanta	13	8	.619	6
Milwaukee	12	9	.571	7
Charlotte	12	10	.545	7 1/2
Indiana	9	11	.450	9 1/2
Toronto	7	15	.318	12 1/2

Pacific Division				
	W	L	Pct	Gh
LA Lakers	18	7	.720	-
Seattle	16	9	.640	2
Portland	13	10	.565	4
LA Clippers	9	14	.391	8
Sacramento	8	15	.348	9
Golden State	8	15	.348	9
Phoenix	6	15	.286	10

### NBA results

Results of National Basketball Association games on Saturday

Miami	89	Toronto	88
Atlanta	106	Philadelphia	81
New York	89	Denver	82
Cleveland	101	Minnesota	93
Chicago	87	Charlotte	82
San Antonio	106	Dallas	105
Milwaukee	101	New Jersey	91
Utah	101	Orlando	68
Houston	109	Seattle	100
LA Clippers	106	Sacramento	94

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# Jordan sent strong message to Israel, Muasher reports

## 'Jordan is committed to peace and cannot condone actions undermining peace process'

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan on Sunday reiterated its total commitment to the Middle East peace process as a strategic principle and option and stressed that Jewish settlement on Arab lands pose the most serious danger to peace.

Information Minister Marwan Muasher, speaking after a Cabinet session during which he reported on his visit last week to Israel to discuss the peace process with Israeli government leaders.

"First we would like to emphasize that the government backs the peace process with all its power and all the Jordanian government's efforts are steered towards giving it momentum because peace is a strategic option for Jordan and it is in the Kingdom's interest to adopt this stand," Dr. Muasher told reporters.

"At the same time we have to warn against the

danger posed to this process by any party that tends to act against it and whenever we feel that such act is a cause of retreat," he added.

His visit to Israel, Dr. Muasher said, aimed at underlining these two facts from the Jordanian point of view because "Jordan is keen on promoting peace and backs any effort that gives impetus to it."

"We see that the (Jewish) settlements in the occupied lands pose the gravest danger to the peace process. In this matter the Jordanian position was very clear to the Israeli government and the various Israeli public organisations which are concerned with this process," the minister said.

"The Kingdom considers settlements as posing a direct threat to the peace process in its entirety because they contravene the principle of exchanging land-for-peace, which is the

basis of the peace process, and violate the principle of establishing a Palestinian state. The Israeli policies tend to revive the idea of a substitute homeland (for the Palestinians) and in the final analysis these settlements directly threaten Jordan," he said.

"Therefore any policy calling for expanding the settlements and the addition of a single stone to the settlements will demolish peace which we are all striving to achieve," Dr. Muasher added.

Calling for collective efforts to make it clear to the Israeli government that its settlement policy threatens the peace process, Dr. Muasher said: "We appreciate the roles of Europe and the United States which have undertaken firm positions against the Israeli policy and we call on the two

(Continued on page 7)

## Water arrangement with Israel is on course despite delays — Kavar

By Sa'eda Kilani  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The government regretted on Sunday that Jordan was not fully benefiting from its water rights regained from the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty but said the problem was infrastructure-related and not political.

Minister of Water and Irrigation Samir Kavar said that appendix II of the peace treaty shows that Jordan restored its full rights of water but needs to build dams to benefit from the full rights.

"Water talks are going in the right track," Mr. Kavar told the Lower House of Parliament. "Negotiations for the 50 million cubic metres of potable water might have been delayed for a year, but (the government) is exerting all efforts to secure this water for Jordan."

The minister was replying to a question raised by Islamic Action Front Deputy Abdul Rahim Ekour, who complained that the treaty's provisions regarding Jordan's water rights were ambiguous.

Deputy Ekour said that Israel should provide at least 50 million cubic metres from the River Jordan.

Under the October 1994 peace treaty, Israel agreed that Jordan would get 215 million cubic metres of water under several specific arrangements. These included the pumping of water from Lake Tiberias through a pipeline, with varying quantities depending on sea-

son and by building dams on the Yarmouk and Jordan rivers.

Included in the arrangements is also a proposed water purification plant on the Israeli side of the border. Jordan is supposed to get 50 million cubic metres of potable water from the proposed plant.

Jordan and Israel are seeking financing for the dams, and Israel is expected to come up with its own arrangement for the water purification plant.

Referring to the expected water from the proposed plant, Mr. Kavar said this amount of water will be used for drinking and will be reduced to 40 million cubic metres after purification.

But Jordan will not get the share of potable water until the plant has been built, he pointed out.

The minister also said a study for the Al Wahdah Dam (between Jordan and Syria) has not been finalised yet but would be ready in two to three months.

Another dam that will store water from the Yarmouk River in the Karamah Dam reservoir will be finished in July, and will have an initial capacity of 10 million cubic metres. The dam's capacity will be raised to 55 million cubic metres by 1998.

Another IAF deputy, Mohammad Oweidah, also complained about the visit of Information Minister Marwan Muasher to Israel last week while "Zionist aggressions continue against our people."

There was no answer from

the government.

Hamzeh Mansour, spokesperson of the 15-member IAF bloc, criticised the government's internal policy and complained about what it

he described as harassment and delay of some Jordanians at the Queen Alia airport. Mr. Mansour was referring to some Jordanians who came back from Yemen this week on Royal Jordanian airlines. He said one of them was Farid Freij, member of the Mafrqa municipal council. There was no comment from the government on Mr. Mansour's complaint.

Independent Islamist Abdul Majeed Aqtash complained about the arrest of a Jordanian citizen, Mohammad Salwani, for two weeks without the authorities revealing the reason or place of his detention.

Mr. Aqtash said, during the question-and-answer period, that the concerned authorities should inform Mr. Salwani's family of his whereabouts to enable them to appoint a lawyer.

Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti said the deputy had not informed him of the incident at the time it happened while the same deputy was in contact with him over other issues.

"Probably the deputy wants only to show off in front of cameras and his colleagues," the premier said.

The deputy protested but he was not heard.

## Jordan, Qatar review cooperation in education

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Karim Al Kabariti on Sunday received Qatari Education Minister Mohammad Kafud and reviewed with him scope of cooperation in the field of education.

Mr. Kafud expressed Jordan's willingness to provide Qatar with qualified Jordanian teachers and to welcome Qatari students in the Jordanian universities.

Dr. Kafud lauded Jordanian-Qatari relations, and stressed his country's genuine interest in benefiting from Jordanian educational expertise.

The meeting was attended by Minister of Higher Education Abdullah Ensour



Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti on Sunday holds talks with Qatari Education Minister Mohammad Kafud in a meeting attended by Minister of Higher Education Abdullah Ensour and Qatari Ambassador Naser Abdul Aziz Al Nasr (Petra photo)

and Minister of Education Munther Masri in addition to the Qatari ambassador to Jordan, Naser Abdul Aziz Al Nasr.

Also on Sunday, Mr. Kabariti received a special Dutch envoy who is on a

visit to the Kingdom as part of a regional tour to discuss preparations for a follow-up meeting on Euro-Mediterranean partnership scheduled for April. The meeting will be chaired by the Netherlands, which will

assume the presidency of the European Union in January. Mr. Kabariti and the Dutch official discussed political, economic, security, social and cultural dimensions of the Barcelona conference held this year.

## Businessmen seek inclusion of Jordanian input in U.S.-Palestinian free-trade status

By Ghalia Alul  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Jordanian businessmen on Sunday complained that Jordanian products are not granted the same special free-trade treatment the United States has offered to Palestinians. They demanded that Jordanian inputs in Palestinian products be considered as Palestinian under the special status arrangements.

This demand was made at a meeting between Jordanian businessmen and an American delegation representing different economic sectors who discussed the U.S. free-trade status for Palestinian products in the U.S.

The U.S. participants said that the new trade initiative will bring about economic development in the region as well as provide new economic opportunities for the Palestinian people.

During the meeting, which was organised by the Jordan Trade Association (JTA) in cooperation with the Jordan Businessmen Association (JBA), a White House statement and a set of questions and answers clarifying the concept of the

special trade status were distributed.

However, some of the main issues reflecting Jordanian businessmen's concerns were not made clear.

The special status for Palestinian products took effect as of Nov. 21.

It grants duty-free status to all kinds of products from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, provided that these products meet a set of rules of origin requirements. U.S. exports to the territories also enjoy the same treatment.

Palestinian exports to the U.S. should have 35 per cent input from the West Bank and Gaza Strip to qualify for the special status. In addition, the final product must be directly sent to the United States.

The arrangement is identical to that accorded to Israeli products under a U.S.-Israel trade agreement.

The head of the U.S. delegation, Anthony Rock, described the status given to the Palestinians as an unprecedented gesture by U.S. President Bill Clinton. He added that it aims at providing new employment opportunities for Palestinians outside Israel.

strengthening trade ties among the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the United States and attracting further investment as well as achieving sustainable economic growth.

But Jordanian businessmen were sceptical that Jordan will benefit from this special trade status as their products, unlike the Israeli ones, will not be welcomed within the 35 per cent rule.

JTA Chairman Bassam Saket urged that Jordanian inputs be considered as Palestinian within the 35 per cent rule and thus receive the same treatment when the product enters the U.S. market.

"If the aim (of this special trade status) was to strengthen the concept of peace among countries of the region and create an independent economy, we as exporters seek an opportunity to deal with the Palestinian economy," he told reporters after the meeting.

Dr. Saket added that the special free-trade decision, "which had many gaps," did not take into account the economies of the countries which signed peace with Israel.

A Jordanian businessman

echoed many of his colleagues' worries that neither Jordan nor Palestine will benefit from this special trade status and asserted that this status was meant to appease the Israeli industry by making it more competitive at the expense of Palestinian industry.

Mr. Rock said it was the first step where the main focus now was on the West Bank and Gaza Strip, adding that this status would make Palestinian products more competitive and the economy more viable.

"The focus of this proclamation was primarily on developing the economic viability of and investment into the West Bank and Gaza," Mr. Rock said, who added that this is also a step towards stability in the region.

The list of questions and answers said that "the concept of duty-free status for products of the region also included products of border areas between Israel and Egypt, and Israel and Jordan, in an effort to reaffirm the importance of fostering economic development and investment in the

(Continued on page 7)

## PNA court sentences 2 Hamas militants to death

GAZA CITY (Agencies) —

A Palestinian court on Sunday sentenced to death two policemen belonging to the hardline Hamas group after they were convicted of murdering a policeman and a civilian, their lawyer said.

Khalil Hamed Al Sakani, 24, and Hatem Abu Wadi, 21, from Jabaliya in the Gaza Strip, were given the death penalty by a military court in Gaza City, said Nazem Aoueba.

He said the two men had 15 days to appeal the sentence.

Mr. Aoueba said the two policemen were found guilty of killing policeman Akram Ahmad on July 15, 1995, in order to steal his gun.

They were also convicted of taking part in the murder of Abdullah Al Danaf on Oct. 12 last year, he added.

Danaf was killed by mistake and the gunmen were thought to be targeting his brother Mohammed Al

Danaf who is a senior Palestinian security official.

A third man, 18-year-old Abdul Latif Al Ashkar, was sentenced to 20 years in prison for the same offences, said Mr. Aoueba, adding that the youth was spared the death penalty because he was under 18 when the crimes were committed.

All three were accused by the court of being part of a commando group of Hamas' military wing Izzedine Al Qassam.

The death penalty has never been carried out by the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) since the self-rule authority was set up in 1994, although the courts have handed out the sentence on several occasions.

PNA: No extradition

A Palestinian security official said Sunday the PNA will not extradite suspects to Israel in last week's

slaying of two Jewish settlers.

"We will never hand over anyone to the Israelis. We have our own courts and process," Colonel Jibril Rajoub, head of Palestinian preventive security in the West Bank, told the Associated Press.

"We will prosecute those responsible. We have done this in the past, and we have been successful."

Israel has demanded that the Palestinians find and hand over the attackers in last Wednesday's drive-by shooting in the West Bank — that killed two settlers. The assailants fled into Palestinian-controlled town of Ramallah.

The PNA has arrested dozens of members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), a Syrian-based Palestinian opposition group that claimed responsibility for the shootings. The PFLP opposes the

Israel-Palestinian peace agreement.

Palestinian security services are expected to turn over to Israel mug shots of the PFLP suspects in Palestinian custody, for possible identification by the attack survivors.

"The aim of submitting photos is for a possible identification by those who were attacked. It does not mean we are handing over those suspects," Col. Rajoub said. "It is the Palestinian security who has carried out the searches, arrests, investigations and interrogations — so we are the ones who will complete the process."

The Israeli government says the Israeli-Palestinian peace agreements require the Palestinians to extradite the attackers. But the agreements say extraditions can be delayed if the suspects to be extradited are in custody or serving a prison sentence.

## COLUMBIA

### Deal for wheels targets the affluent

CHICAGO (R) — A Chicago-area car dealership has his-and-hers Christmas gifts for the upwardly mobile. Steve Foley Rolls-Royce in suburban Northbrook, Illinois, began offering an opulent black-and-burgundy Rolls-Royce Silver Spur and a burgundy Bentley Brooklands for a package price of \$315,000. The budget-minded should note that this represents a savings of nearly \$15,000. The automobiles' new owners will find themselves surrounded by exotic wood and leather, with built-in cellular phones on which to call their country club or stockbroker. "We build our cars to the best level we can and then put a price on them," said Vernon Smith, a sales executive at the dealership, adding a couple had arranged to drop by for a look. Last year the dealership sold a pair of \$395,000 Bentleys for \$359,000.

### Russia's 'Nessie' frightens villagers

BENYOK, Russia (R) — Near the bottom of Lake Brosno, or perhaps deep in the recesses of man's imagination, a monster of huge proportions lurks. The evidence, much like that of Scotland's Loch Ness monster, is based on a single photograph and a few alleged sightings. The picture shows a panoramic view of Lake Brosno with an object floating in the foreground. As with the Scottish 'Nessie,' it is not clear whether the object is a large log — or something more ominous from the deep. "I'm afraid," said one elderly woman, Varya, who lives in the small lakeside village of Benyok about 400 kilometres northwest of Moscow. "I do not feel comfortable staying in this place. The monster could crawl into my house any day."

Tanya, another grandmotherly type who believes the creature hides from humans near the lake bottom, said, "I saw a head, like a fish — and big." She sketched a snake-like head rising from the water with a large eye on the side. Tourists from Moscow camping near the lake added to the legend by taking a photograph after their seven-year-old son shouted out that he had seen a dragon monster.

### Chinese denied Taiwan awards

TAIPEI (AFP) — "In the heat of the sun," by mainland China director Jiang Wen, scooped six Golden Horse Prizes in the Chinese-speaking movie industry's top awards. But a boycott ordered by the Beijing authorities stopped Jiang from going to Taiwan to collect his Golden Horse for best director and Xia Yu to collect her award as best actress. Organisers allowed mainland Chinese movies to enter for the first time in 33 years of the awards, but Beijing, which has considered Taiwan a renegade province since the end of the Chinese civil war in 1949, stopped eight Chinese-made movies being considered.

### Eastwood turns father — for fifth time

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — Actor Clint Eastwood is a father for the fifth time, with the birth of a little girl, as yet unnamed, who arrived Thursday. Eastwood, 66, and his wife Dina Ruiz, 31, were married last March 31 in Las Vegas, Nevada.

## King opens conference of Arab political parties in Amman today

By Sa'eda Kilani  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein will today open the first pan-Arab political parties gathering that is aimed at invigorating joint Arab action in all crucial Arab issues, organisers said.

Representatives of at least forty political parties from all over the Arab World in addition to 20 other parties from Jordan are expected to attend the three-day conference. The gathering, organised by the centrist Al Mustaqbal Party, will tackle three main issues: Joint

Arab action, pluralism and freedom of expression in the Arab World, as well as the present status of political parties and ways of enhancing their role.

According to Abdul Aziz Al Sayyed, coordinator of the conference, organisers hope the participants will agree on the establishment of a general secretariat which would coordinate Arab political parties' stands vis-a-vis Arab issues.

"The gathering will not save the (Arab) Nation from its miseries and from the catastrophes and disasters

that had hit the region over the past decades," Mr. Sayyed told the Jordan Times Sunday. "But we expect it will lay the foundation stone for joint Arab action."

The organisers said the conference will cost only JD35,000 and is self-funded by members and friends of Al Mustaqbal Party. Donations from outside parties were not accepted, according to Mr. Sayyed.

Delegates to the meeting are representatives of "operating and legal" political groups in their respective countries. Mr. Sayyed said

that the underground political parties operating in many countries where political pluralism is not recognised were not invited to avoid friction.

"We cannot assign ourselves as judges (to whether this or that illegal political party should be invited or not)," he said. "It is a very difficult process. We hope, however, that the conference will be held on a regular basis and will be expanded to include all. For the time being, we only want the idea of grouping all parties together to materialise."

Mr. Sayyed said the prime

minister, Abdul Karim Kabariti, gave approval for the holding of the conference in two days after he was approached to approve it.

Following is a provisional list of the parties expected to attend:

Lebanon: The Peoples Leagues and Committees Coalition, Al Kata'eb (Falangist) Party and the Syrian National Socialist Party.

Egypt: The National Democratic Coalition Party, the Liberal Party, the Nasserite Arab Democratic Party and the National

Democratic Party.

Yemen: The Arab Socialist Baath Party.

Iraq: The Arab Socialist Baath Party.

Libya: The Revolutionary Brotherhood Movement.

Syria: The Arab Socialist Baath Party, the Socialist Arab Union Party, the Syrian Communist Party, the Socialist Democratic

Unionist Party and the Arab Socialist Movement.

Morocco: Al Istiklal, the Constitutional Union, the National Liberal Coalition, and the Progress and

Socialist Party.

Tunisia: Democratic Party and the Unionist Democratic Party.

Algeria: National Liberation Front and the Algerian Revivalist (Tajdid) Party.

Palestine: Fateh, Hamas, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP).

Also participating in the conference will be a representative of the Arab Agricultural Engineers